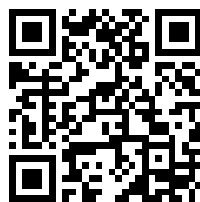


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**A SHORT HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS**

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" Blenheim "  
" Ramillies "  
" Oudenarde "  
" Malplaquet "  
" Dettingen "  
" Minden "  
" Corunna "  
" Martinique, 1809 "  
" Albuhera "  
" Badajoz "  
" Salamanca "  
" Vittoria "  
" Pyrenees "  
" Nivelle "  
" Orthes "  
" Toulouse "  
" Peninsula "  
" Waterloo "  
" Alma "  
" Inkerman "  
" Sevastopol "  
" Lucknow "



R. W. F.

A  
SHORT  
HISTORY  
OF THE

ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS:

BY  
Major E.O. Skaife.. O.B.E



" Ashantee, 1873-4 "  
" Burma, 1885-87 "  
" Relief of Ladysmith "  
" South Africa, 1899-1902 "  
" Pekin, 1900 "  
" Marne, 1914 "  
" Ypres, 1914, '17, '18 "  
" Somme, 1916, '18 "  
" Hindenburg Line "  
" Vittorio Veneto "  
" Doiran, 1917, '18 "  
" Gallipoli, 1915-16 "  
" Egypt, 1915-17 "  
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## PREFACE

ROYAL WELCHMEN! Read and learn the glorious history of your Regiment, *not* that you may brag to others of its badges and its battle honours, but that you may know the standard set you by your predecessors.

Let the deeds of the past be a spur in peace time to keenness in work, in sport, and in maintaining the honour of the Regiment.

Cymry! Be proud of the prowess of your Regiments, and watch jealously the interests of the men who, so long as wars last, are the guardians of your liberty.

Ei gwrol ryfelwyr gwladgarwyr tra mad  
Dros ryddid collasant eu gwaed.

217

1. The first part of the book is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and is divided into two parts, the first of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and the second of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world.

2. The second part of the book is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and is divided into two parts, the first of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and the second of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world.

3. The third part of the book is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and is divided into two parts, the first of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world, and the second of which is a general introduction to the subject of the history of the world.

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## ERRATA

Page 1, second para., line 4, *for* “1690”  
*read* “1689”.

Page 2, first para., line 1, *for* “1690” *read*

“1689”



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## NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

IN publishing a new edition of a little work first produced in 1913, the writer wishes gratefully to acknowledge the great debt he owes to Mr. A. D. L. Cary, O.B.E., and Captain Stouppe McCance, the authors of the Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, Vols. I and II, 1689-1914. He has followed closely and frequently quoted from these splendid books in the hope of placing before young soldiers, and perhaps before their friends at home, as much of the wonderful story of the Royal Welch as can be compressed into a small space. He had meant before publishing this new edition to await Vol. III of the Records with a view to including an adequate account of the part taken by the Regiment in the Great War. The pressing need for a handbook for regimental purposes has, however, made that impossible, and he has, therefore, attempted with the scanty means at his disposal what can only be regarded as an instalment in the form of a brief sketch of the years 1914-18, to which has been added a chapter on the first five years after the war. Should this present work meet with approval, it is hoped to produce a supplementary book later giving a more worthy account of the Great War, more in proportion to the magnitude of the effort put forth in it by the Royal Welch.





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## INTRODUCTION

"READ and re-read the campaigns of the great captains if you wish to learn war," said the greatest of all captains, and I paraphrase this by saying, Read and re-read the story of your regiment if you wish to know what men can do and have done. If you would learn, as you ought, the lessons of the past, on which to mould your lives and actions and to create a noble future for yourselves, worthy of those who have set so brilliant an example, study this little book. In the pages that follow Major Skaife has condensed two hundred and odd years—a most difficult thing to do. But in the concise history he has written for us there is a moral that adorns a great tale, a story that we may well absorb and from it derive a lesson that will make us worthy of the fine old national regiment to which we belong and the country of our birth.

Royal Welchmen, read and re-read these pages. Every time you do so you will be more grateful to the author, and you will have received an impulse that, in whatever walk of life you may be, will make your hearts beat high and lead you to a life worthy of those magnificent soldiers of Wales who, in peace or war, in life or death, have set us so great an example.

Francis Lloyd  
20 General  
Colonel Royal Welch Division

November 1st, 1924.





# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS

## CHAPTER I.

### THE RAISING OF THE REGIMENT—THE BATTLES OF THE BOYNE AND AUGHTRIM—THE SIEGE OF NAMUR.

THE story of the raising of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, as is the case with many other regiments, is closely related to that of the flight, in December, 1688, of James II, King of England, and of his subsequent attempt to unseat his successors William III and Mary. James had made himself unpopular in England in many ways, and chiefly by his favouring Roman Catholics and persecuting Protestants, but nowhere had this policy been carried out more thoroughly than in Ireland, where his servant, Lord Tyrconnell, had raised a large army and had harried the Protestants to such an extent that they fled to Ulster. When discontent in England reached such a pitch that William of Orange and his English wife were invited to come over from Holland, James had not the heart to fight, but fled at once to France, whose King, Louis XIV, always ready to increase his own power and that of the Catholic Church, immediately lent him a French army and supplied him with money. Thus equipped, James sailed for Ireland, where he could be sure of support, and, landing at Kinsale in March, 1690, soon entered Dublin and made preparations to reconquer England.

Neither King William nor his Parliament could afford to let these plans take shape, so, the army being then too small to oppose James's French and Irish troops, the King was authorized to raise certain new regiments. Thus it came about that, on March 16th, 1688, a warrant was given to Lord Herbert of Chirbury "by beat of drum or otherwise to raise volunteers for a Regiment of Foot," to consist of 8 companies of 60 private soldiers (3 sergeants, 3 corporals, and 2 drummers in each company) to be quartered at Ludlow. The command of this regiment, which was raised in the border counties of Wales, was from April 9th taken over by its founder's cousin, Colonel Charles Herbert, and for the first few years of its existence they were generally known as "Herbert's Regiment (23rd Foot)."

August 30th, 169<sup>89</sup>~~9~~, found them disembarking under Colonel Herbert, with Major Toby Purcell as first Second-in-Command, near Belfast, and thus, only five months after being raised, already on active service.

The British Army under the Duke of Schomberg at once advanced south, the Irish troops retiring in front of it and burning Newry and Carlingford as they went.

Further than Dundalk the Duke would not go for the time being, and there the army settled down in winter quarters. King James's troops were similarly quartered along the River Boyne and near Dublin. The first winter of Herbert's Regiment must have been one of abject misery, as far too little food was given to the troops, and both officers and men in the British troops were too lazy and inexperienced to get timber and straw, with which to make huts, as their Dutch allies did, and thus protect themselves from the wet. Terrible losses from disease were the result, and over 400 of Herbert's alone seem to have died. King William on his arrival, in June, 1690, set to work to improve matters, but it must have been a hard task, for even in 1691 things were still so bad that Toby Purcell of the 23rd, finding his men to be starving and despairing of getting help through the usual channels, writes direct to the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, whereupon the Secretary of State for War, to whom the letter was sent, writes on it: "Mr. Pereira is ordered to send Colonel Purcell bread and Colonel Brewer, written to for cheese, which he is desired to spare as much as he can, so long as the soldiers have money."

**Battle of  
the Boyne,  
July 1st,  
1690.**

None the less, by June 27th, 1690, the Army, which "during the winter had been forced by disease to leave Dundalk and return north, was again concentrated on that place, and on the 30th reached the Boyne. King William rode forward to reconnoitre, and, being observed by the enemy, narrowly escaped being killed; for two six-pounder guns concealed in a body of horsemen having been fired at him, the second shot ricocheted off the river bank and passed so close to His Majesty, that it took away a piece of his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, raised the skin on the blade of his right shoulder, and drew a little blood, but, a plaster being put on, His Majesty continued on horseback without the least concern until four in the afternoon, when he dined."

On the next day the famous Battle of the Boyne took place. The French and Irish were drawn up on the rising ground overlooking Oldbridge, some two miles upstream from Drogheda. The King's plan was to turn their left flank by passing most of his British troops over the river at Slane or, if the bridge there were down, at Rossnaree ford, about four miles from Oldbridge. The Dutch and other allied troops

were next to attack frontally at the latter place. Then, if all went well, the victory was to be crowned by the cavalry, under his Majesty in person, fording the Boyne just above Drogheda and coming down on the enemy's right. Early in the morning the new English regiments started off, each man wearing a sprig of green in his hat to distinguish him from the French and Irish, who wore white cockades, and, after nearly an hour's fight, they forced a passage at Rossnaree ford. This caused James to weaken his centre by sending most of his French troops to secure his left flank from being turned. William then ordered his Dutchmen to advance. This they did, and, wading across the river ten abreast at Oldbridge, after a hard struggle, in which the Duke of Schomberg was killed, forced the Irish back on to Sheephouse ridge behind. The moment then arrived for the cavalry, and the King at once brought them across the Boyne as planned, and completed the victory. James did not await the end of the battle, but fled to Dublin, and a few days later took ship to France. It is evident that Major Toby Purcell distinguished himself especially in the battle, for the spurs which he wore that day were treasured in the Regiment until 1842, being kept and worn by successive Senior Majors. Unfortunately, in 1842, the house of the then Senior Major at Montreal was burnt to the ground, and they were lost. None the less, although the spurs themselves could no longer be produced, the custom was and is maintained each St. David's Day for the Senior Major to propose the toast of "*Toby Purcell, his spurs, and St. David.*"

Dublin was entered a few days after the victory, and in turn Athlone, Wexford, Clonmel, and Waterford were seized. Efforts to take Limerick in 1690, however, failed for the time, and the siege had to be raised.

In the campaign of 1691, at the victory of Aughrim,  
**Battle of** the 23rd, by the very impetuosity of their attack,  
**Aughrim,** lost severely. Plunging into the bog, by which the  
**July 18th,** enemy's front was protected, they advanced, waist-  
**1691.** deep in mud and water against his position. Having  
reached firm ground, they drove the Irish from hedge-

row to hedgerow, until, becoming thus too far advanced to receive support, they were charged by Irish cavalry, and driven back into the bog. Reinforcements then coming up, the position was carried, and the enemy fled. Colonel Herbert, who had been taken prisoner by the enemy in the first attack, was barbarously murdered a few hours later, and Major Purcell succeeded to the command. A few months later the Regiment returned to England, fewer troops being required to pacify Ireland, and by 1694 King William was sufficiently freed from anxiety in Great Britain to enable him to carry on the war against the French in the Netherlands. In January of that year the 23rd landed on the

Continent for the first time, and were garrisoned at Ostend. Eighteen months of manœuvring and indecisive fighting passed, until at length, in June, 1695, the Allied Army succeeded in reaching the walls of Namur, the recapture of which was the King's first object. By July 1st the siege train had arrived, and the city was surrounded. On the evening of the 8th, after several days' bombardment, an assault was delivered by two columns, one consisting of the Guards and detachments of grenadiers from every regiment, including the 23rd, and one by Dutch troops against some outer works and a covered way leading to one of the bastions. Both attacks succeeded, the Dutch after being supported by the 1st, 7th, and 23rd Foot, among other regiments, and the siege was then pushed on with redoubled vigour. On the 16th the troops were launched against a counterscarp, which formed part of the defence of the St. Nicolas Gate of the city. At 4 p.m. grenadiers from various regiments, including the 23rd, leading the way, pushed coolly forward to the palisades and threw their grenades over. The 23rd Foot and another regiment then advanced up the glacis under a galling fire. On their reaching the top, the French sprang some small mines, which caused the assailants to lose a little ground. Again they gallantly pressed forward, and commenced to lodge woolsacks and gabions upon the palisades of the glacis adjoining the bastion of St. Nicolas. The enemy set fire to the woolsacks, and the 23rd lost heavily, being exposed for a long time to the full fire of the enemy. The ground gained was, however, held, and the result was the surrender on the 24th of the town of Namur. The losses of the 23rd in the assault of the 16th July can be judged from the fact that eleven of their officers were killed or wounded. The siege of the citadel was continued until August 19th, when a terrific assault gained the Allies a big footing in its defences, whereupon the French garrison surrendered, and were allowed to march out with colours flying, drums beating, six pieces of cannon, and as many covered wagons.

The honour of taking possession of the gates was assigned to the 23rd as a mark of appreciation of its services. In 1900 the honour "Namur, 1695," was granted to all regiments taking part in the siege, to be borne on the colours. After the capture of this important fortress fighting went on with no appreciable advantage to either side until September, 1697, when a treaty of peace was signed at Ryswick, whereby William III was acknowledged as King of England and securities given for the safety of Holland.

NOTE.—Readers of the above account of the first campaign of the Regiment may be struck by the fact that the Army went into winter quarters almost as soon as it had landed in Ireland, and before it had effected anything, and, if they read on, they will find that right up to



and including the Peninsular War this closing of active operations at the end of each summer was the rule rather than the exception. They must not, however, conclude that this was done in order to rest the troops, still less to allow of them playing football, but must remember that the beautiful hard tarmac roads of the present day did not exist then, in fact, there were very few roads at all, and that, as soon as the autumn rains set in, the country became quite impassable for troops and their wagons. Thus it often happened even in those days that armies were robbed by the weather of the fruits of their victories, just as in the late war the Allies were unable owing to rain to exploit their successes on the River Somme.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

THE Treaty of Ryswick gave but a short breathing space to the British and Dutch nations, since, on the death of the King of Spain, Louis XIV laid claim to the vacant throne on behalf of his grandson Philip, and, by way of backing this claim up, seized without declaration of war a number of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, which by the terms of the Treaty were garrisoned by the Dutch. At all costs the French had to be prevented from adding the Spanish dominions to their own, as that would have made them masters of Europe, so war was declared. The troops, and amongst them the 23rd, embarked for Holland in 1701, and King William fully intended to drive the French at once out of the fortresses which Louis had so treacherously seized from the Dutch. Unfortunately, as the result of his horse falling with him, he died before the operations could begin, leaving his successor, Queen Anne, to carry on the fight.

Austria joined the British and Dutch in their struggle against the French, and eventually, after much wrangling as to who was to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces, John Churchill, Earl and later Duke of Marlborough, was appointed. He would have liked to have gone "all out" for the enemy at once, and to have dealt him a decisive blow, but he was forced by the timidity of the Dutch Commissioners to confine himself during 1702 and 1703 to ejecting the French from the fortresses mentioned above. Liège was the last to be recaptured in 1702, and of this Marlborough wrote: "By the extraordinary bravery of the officers and soldiers the citadel has been carried by storm." The 23rd took part in this siege, and it is worthy of note that about two months later the Regiment was selected to be one of the three original Fusilier regiments, and was named "The Welsh Regiment of Fusiliers."

In the winter of 1703 it was learnt that the French plan for 1704 was to join forces with the Bavarians and to capture Vienna. The loss of this city might have put the Austrians out of the war, and so Marlborough and his ally, Prince Eugene of Savoy, decided to forestall the enemy by a rapid move, and to deal Bavaria a knock-out blow before the French main forces could arrive. In the early summer of 1704 the advance began. Bonn, Coblenz, Mayence, and Mannheim were passed in turn, and even Marlborough's Dutch allies were deceived as to the goal he had in view until he had reached the Danube.

**Battle of  
Schellenberg,  
July 2nd, 1704.**

The first battle, that of Schellenberg, although not on Colours of the Regiment, was an opportunity, which the Welsh Fusiliers took, for especially distinguishing themselves. The Grenadier Guards, Royal Scots, and the Welsh Fusiliers were the leading troops of the Army, and, with the help of some Dutch, carried the Bavarian positions before the arrival of the rest of the Army. The Regiment had 6 officers killed, 12 officers wounded, 6 sergeants killed and 2 wounded, and 60 rank and file killed and 156 wounded. The Bavarians were routed, and their generals only escaped by swimming across the Danube.

This victory opened the way into Bavaria, and, as the Elector refused to make peace, his country was laid waste right up to the walls of Munich. The arrival, however, of 25,000 French troops and their junction with the Bavarians, completely altered the situation, and Marlborough at once recrossed the Danube, joined up with his ally, Prince Eugene, and prepared to deliver a decisive attack.

**Battle of  
Blenheim,  
August 13th,  
1704.**

The enemy had taken their stand on a long low ridge on the far side of a stream called the River Nebel, which had marshy banks. Their right rested in the recently fortified village of Blenheim. The 23rd were in the Brigade of General Row, which was ordered to attack this village. The Brigadier led the first wave himself, and, in accordance with his orders, the troops neither halted nor opened fire until he had driven his sword into the palisade that defended the place.

The men, in their desperate struggles to close with the French, tried to tear the palisade down with their hands, and their very clothes were scorched by the enemy fire, so near were they, but they were forced to retire and reform; subsequent efforts made by them in co-operation with other troops also failed to reduce the stronghold. Prince Eugene's soldiers on the right were held up, too, but a brilliant charge made by Marlborough himself at the head of his cavalry pierced the centre of the enemy's position. Marshal Tallard was captured, 12,000 French surrendered in and around Blenheim alone, and the total enemy casualties amounted to 40,000, besides loss of 124 guns, 129 colours, and 171 standards. The 23rd's casualties were again high, and included 9 officers. During 1705 the Regiment saw but little fighting, as lack of allied support thwarted Marlborough's plans for taking the war into the enemy's country. The first move in 1706 was to have been a surprise advance with 60,000 men from the vicinity of Maastricht on Namur, but Marshal Villeroi learnt of it in time, and, on May 23rd, an equal force of French, Spaniards and Bavarians, with their centre at the village of Ramillies, was found barring the allied march.

**Battle of Ramillies, May 23rd, 1706.** Marlborough quickly deployed his army, and, by making a feint with his British troops against the enemy's left wing, tricked him into weakening his centre, which was the real point of attack. To back up the decisive blow, two British brigades, and with them the 23rd, were transferred from the right, and their support enabled the allies to carry the village of Ramillies at the point of the bayonet. As soon as the enemy centre gave way, the remainder of the British on the right wing were ordered to advance, and soon the French Army became a panic-stricken mob. The pursuit continued all night, almost to within sight of Louvain, the Duke himself, who had mounted his horse at 4 a.m. on the 23rd, remaining in the saddle until noon on the 24th in his eagerness to press the enemy in their retreat. The French losses were 13,000 men, 120 colours and standards, and 68 guns.

As a result of the battle, Marlborough was able to sweep victoriously across Flanders, and eventually reached and took Ostend. A month's incessant rain then made it impossible to continue the campaign.

Difficulties with the allies prevented Marlborough from striking in 1707, and the French were in no mood to fight another battle, but in 1708 Louis XIV gathered 100,000 men, under Marshal Vendôme, between Mons and Tournai for an attack on Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges. Ghent and Bruges were treacherously surrendered, but Marlborough blocked the way to Brussels with 75,000 troops. Vendôme then decided first to capture Oudenarde, and, having sent off troops to invest it, marched towards Lessines to cover the siege. Marlborough, however, made a forced march, forestalled him, threw bridges across the River Dender at Lessines, and caused him to retire to a position near Oudenarde itself.

**Battle of Oudenarde, July 11th, 1708.** On June 30th the Allies, who had bridged and crossed the River Escaut, attacked the French. The battle began with the storming of the village of Eyne by Sabine's Brigade, in which the 23rd were serving.

Three enemy battalions were captured there, and four others cut to pieces. After a short halt the brigade, together with two others, again advanced, and, in spite of a fierce counter-attack by thirty French battalions, slowly pushed the enemy back in a hand-to-hand fight from hedge to hedge.

A bold thrust by Marlborough against the enemy right settled the day, and the French fled to Ghent with a loss of 4,000 killed and 7,000 prisoners, including 11 generals and 700 other officers.

In the hope of drawing the French Army into a second battle, the Duke now laid siege to Lille, which had been recently fortified by the famous Vauban, and which was held by 15,000 men. A French army

of 110,000 men was sent to relieve the fortress, but shied off without fighting, and after a siege of nearly four months Lille fell. Ghent and Bruges shared the same fate, and the Army then went into winter quarters.

Negotiations for peace having failed, the French feared that their own country would now be invaded. A fresh commander to oppose Marlborough was found in Marshal Villars, and he, with 90,000 men, took up a position from Douai through La Bassée to Bethune. Owing to lack of forage the Allies could not move before May, and then, with 110,000 men, they marched against Villars. The latter having drawn 3,000 picked reinforcements from the garrison of Tournai, Marlborough gave up his intention of attacking Villars, and, instead, besieged and captured the weakened city in less than a month. Thence he marched to the siege of Mons, with the result that Villars came out of the trenches with 95,000 men to relieve the place. Advancing as far as Malplaquet, a hamlet close to Mons, he again dug himself in, but owing to difficulties made by the Dutch, the Duke was unable to attack him until the 11th. Meanwhile, Villars had had two days in which to strengthen his position; the result was a most bloody battle, in which 10 officers of the 23rd were killed or wounded, and the Allied casualties alone were 20,000.

Early on the morning of September 11th the armies were on foot. The 23rd and other regiments fell in on the ground where they had spent the night, and Divine service was held by the chaplain. The French camp was a short distance in front, but a thick mist over-spread the woods and hid the armies from each other.

Under cover of the fog the artillery was brought forward and preparations made for attack. The French heard the movement, and stood to arms. Shortly after eight the signal was given. The 23rd were amongst the regiments which assaulted the French entrenchments in the wood of Taisnière. After an hour's fighting the barricades of felled trees had been torn down and the enemy left wing forced back out of the wood. A successful charge by the cavalry decided the day, and the enemy left in great confusion, losing 16 guns, 20 colours, and 26 standards.

After this battle Mons was captured, and the Army then went into winter quarters. During 1710 the city of Douai was besieged, and the 23rd lost very heavily before it was taken. The following year saw the surrender of Bouchain, but at this juncture the Duke of Marlborough was relieved of his command, and thus ended the marvellous military career of one of the greatest soldiers the world has ever seen. He never fought a battle which he did not win, and never besieged a town which he did not take. He broke the power of one of the most powerful kings that ever ruled in France, and made the name of the British soldier. Peace was signed at Utrecht on April 11th, 1713. The



Protestant succession to the throne of England was secured, and several possessions were ceded to England, including Newfoundland, Gibraltar, and parts of Canada.

In reward for its gallantry in these great fights the 23rd were now officially styled "The Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusiliers," and in 1714 shortly after George I had succeeded to the throne, it was named "H.R.H. The Prince of Wales' Own Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusiliers," and granted the three badges of the Princes of Wales. This title, on the death of George I and the accession of King George II, was changed to "The King's Own Royal Regiment of Welch Fuziliers."

NOTE.—The origin of the title "Fusiliers." "The Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers" give very clearly the origin of the title "Fusiliers." "Fusilier regiments were originally raised with the object of protecting the artillery, for which purpose it was necessary that they should be lightly armed and quick loaders. The three first regiments so designated were the 7th (Royal Fusiliers), 21st (North British Fusiliers), and the 23rd (Royal Welch Fusiliers). . . . The officers were armed with a light fusil instead of a pike or espontoon. All the companies wore caps of the pattern of, but not so high as, those of the grenadier companies of line regiments. Their armament consisted of fusils with slings, cartridge boxes, swords, and bayonets. The fusil was shorter and of less calibre than the musket, and, in consequence, a handier weapon; it was fitted with a flint lock, and fired from the shoulder."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

DURING the reign of King George I no foreign war occurred, but during that of George II the death, in 1740, of the Emperor Charles VI, the last Prince of the House of Austria, was the cause of a European war, into which Britain was eventually drawn. The British people sympathized strongly with the Archduchess Maria Teresa in her claim to succeed to her father's dominions, whilst Louis XV, King of France, warmly backed the pretensions of the Elector of Bavaria. King George II and his ministry succeeded in keeping the country out of war until his Hanoverian territories were endangered. At last, in 1742, some 16,000 British, amongst whom were the Royal Welch, were landed at Ostend, and, moving off from Maastricht in April, 1743, effected a junction with the Austrians and Hanoverians a few miles from Frankfurt. The combined forces, numbering 40,000, later marched to Aschaffenburg on the Main,

where they were joined by King George, who found the Army not only very short of food, but in great danger of being cut off from its base. Indeed, the French commander, whose army of 60,000 was posted on both banks of the Main right across the Allies' line of retreat, boasted that he had his enemy in a "mousetrap." Fortunately, the French general on the right bank, becoming impatient to "trap the mouse," left his strong position, which barred the defile of Dettingen, and advanced into low ground. King George, who was wearing for the occasion the same powder-stained coat that he had worn thirty-five years before, when he led a cavalry charge at Oudenarde, at once gave orders for an attack, and himself led the right of the line. The French batteries having opened fire, the cannon balls were falling thick about him, and he was entreated to "go out of danger." "Don't tell me of danger," he answered, "I'll be even with them." His horse, terrified by the noise, bolted with him. The King succeeded in stopping it, dismounted, and remarked that he would fight on foot, as he could trust his legs not to run away with him. The Royal Welch were on the left of the line, and the following is an extract from the journal of one of their officers :—

" Our men were eager to come to action, and did not at all like the long bullets (as they term'd 'em), for indeed they swept off ranks and files. However, when we came to the small ones, they held them in such contempt that they really kept the same order as at any other time. . . . Our Army gave such shouts before we were engaged, when we were about one hundred paces apart before the action began, that we hear by deserters it brought a pannick amongst them. We attacked the Regiment of Navarre, one of their prime regiments. Our people imitated their predecessors in the last war gloriously, marching in close order, as firm as a wall, and did not fire till we came within sixty paces, and still kept advancing ; so that we had soon closed with the enemy, if they had not retreated ; for, when the smোক blew off a little, instead of being amongst their living we found the dead in heaps by us ; and the second fire turn'd them to the right about, and upon a long trot. We engaged two other regiments afterwards, one after the other, who stood but one fire each ; and their Blue French Foot Guards made the best of their way without firing a shot. Our Colonel fell in the first attack, shot in the mouth, and out at the neck ; but there are hopes of his recovery. The Gens d'Armes are quite ruin'd, who are their chief Dependance, and intended to cut us to pieces without firing a shot. Our Regiment sustain'd little loss, tho' much engaged ; and indeed our whole army gives us great honour. Brigadier Huske, who behaved gloriously, and quite cool, was shot thro' the foot at the time that our Colonel fell, yet continued his post. We have no more than 50 killed and wounded, and one officer besides the Colonel. What preserved us was our keeping close order, and advancing near the enemy ere we fir'd. Several that popp'd at one hundred paces lost more of their men, and did less execution for the French will stand fire at a distance, tho' 'tis plain they cannot look men in the face. 'Till we obtained this victory we wanted bread, and 'tis not to be imagined what fatigues the Army underwent by continual alarms. 'Till now, I assure you, I have not been under cover above two nights in fourteen. The night after the action it rain'd without intermission, 'till eight next morning, and very violent."

The allied advance went on until, at the end of four hours, the enemy's army was wrecked. Their best regiment, when brought up in a last attempt to win the day, earned the nickname of the " Main Ducks," by throwing away their arms and plunging into the River Main, where they were drowned by companies. The French left 6,000 dead on the field. After Dettingen the Allies, chiefly owing to disputes between the commanders, carried out no important operations until, in May, 1745, a French army of 76,000 men under Marshal Saxe swooped down on the frontier fortress of Tournai, and laid siege to it. The main allied troops were concentrated at the time in and around Brussels, but they started

off at once to raise the siege. At Fontenoy, a few miles south-west of Tournai, the French were found in position barring the way. On May 11th, the Allies attacked, but, although the British, who had the post of honour on the right, twice stormed the French trenches and penetrated into the enemy camp, it was in vain, since on the first occasion the Dutch and Austrians fell back under the fire of some French guns on their flank, and on the second failed to advance at all. The British losses were naturally very heavy, those of the Royal Welch amounting to 22 officers and 301 other ranks killed, wounded, or missing. At the same time, defeat though it was, Fontenoy provides one of the best examples of the extraordinary steadiness and determination of the British infantryman, and is memorable to Royal Welchmen for the fact that Sergeant Peter Hewitt for his gallantry in the battle was given a commission in the Regiment, being probably the first of the Royal Welch to achieve this distinction. The war dragged on unsuccessfully until 1748, when peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle.

NOTE.—Most people have heard the story of the mutual politeness of the British and French Guards officers at the Battle of Fontenoy, which deterred either side from being the first to fire, and it will be seen that both at Blenheim and Dettingen the fire discipline of the Royal Welch acted as a similar deterrent to being the first to shoot. The reason is easy to find. Not only was the weapon of those days most inaccurate at long ranges, but it took more than twenty distinct motions to load, prime, and fire the musket, during the performance of which the soldier was almost helpless against either cavalry or infantry attack. With the accurate and rapid firing weapons of to-day the consideration of ammunition supply makes a similar appeal for fire discipline.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

BRITISH friendship with Maria Teresa did not long survive the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Frederick The Great of Prussia had taken from her the province of Silesia, important to this day for its coal and iron, and Maria in due course tried to win it back. France, Russia, and Poland sided with Austria, so, for the reason that Britain could not allow Prussia to be overwhelmed, and that fighting between French and British had already started in North America, war was declared in 1756 against France and her allies.

At this date the Royal Welch Fusiliers were one  
**Siege of** of four regiments garrisoning Minorca, an island in  
**Minorca, 1756.** the Mediterranean, the other three being the 4th, 24th,  
and 34th. The total strength was 2,460.

The French sent 16,000 troops to attack the island, and soon were masters of all of it except the fort, to which the four regiments retired. There they held out, from April 27th until June 29th. A fleet was sent from England to relieve the garrison, but Admiral Byng, who commanded it, was cowardly and sailed away, and left them to their fate. For this he was subsequently shot, after trial by court-martial.

At first the French batteries produced but little effect on the fortifications, but by the beginning of June the enemy had over 100 guns in action, and had made a breach.

On June 27th, at ten o'clock at night, simultaneous assaults were delivered by the enemy on several points of the defences, and the garrison, wearied by seventy days' incessant fighting, could not beat them off entirely. Having obtained a footing, the French, at four o'clock in the morning, got leave to bury their dead, and took advantage of this to strengthen their position. No other course was left now, but to give in. The French loss in this attack alone was 2,000.

As a mark of respect for the gallant defence the regiments were allowed to march out with all the honours of war, namely, "fire-locks on their shoulders, drums beating, colours flying, twenty cartridges for each man, and also lighted matches." The losses of the 23rd exceeded those of any other regiment. The garrison sailed for Gibraltar, whence the Royal Welch Fusiliers returned to England.

In 1756 a 2nd Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers was raised, in which Captain Peter Hewitt, of Fontenoy fame, was one of the first company commanders, but, in 1758, this battalion was formed into a separate regiment—the 68th—(now the 1st Battalion The Durham Light Infantry)—and severed its connection with the Royal Welch.

In 1758 the 1st Battalion again embarked for active service, and landed in August near Emden, joining the allied army under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. The operations which took place in the spring of 1759 were in favour of the Allies, but in July the French succeeded in establishing themselves in an impregnable position at Minden, on the River Weser. Not only were they now able to ruin by plundering a large tract of country, but possession of the bridge over the Weser opened to them the road to Hanover. In spite of the fact that on July 16th the enemy strength was increased to 60,000, whereas he had only 45,000 men, Ferdinand tried every means to bring them to battle. At last he succeeded.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Battle of</b>   | The French had taken up a strong position with          |
| <b>Minden,</b>     | one flank covered by a bog, and the other by the river. |
| <b>August 1st,</b> | Their front was covered by a marshy stream. On          |
| <b>1759.</b>       | July 31st Prince Ferdinand managed to trick them        |
|                    | into believing that he had left a gap in his line, and, |
|                    | during the night the enemy moved out of their position  |

to force their way into this "gap." As soon as they were on the move, Ferdinand drew his forces together again, and when morning broke the French found the British in position ready for them. The leading brigade was formed of the 12th, 23rd, and 37th Regiments, with the 20th, 25th, and 51st in second line. Orders were sent to these troops that, when the time came, they were to advance to beat of drum. This message appears to have been misunderstood, for, as soon as it was received, the six British battalions, backed up by three Hanoverian ones, began to advance—with their drums rolling—to attack the French cavalry. A flight of aides-de-camp was despatched to stop them, as the other troops were not ready, and for a few minutes they waited behind a belt of fir trees. Almost at once, however, the drums began again, and they sallied forth to attack the flower of the French cavalry. The latter, supported by a terrific fire from their artillery, advanced to the charge. The red-coated line halted for a moment, corrected their dressing, and then fired three awful volleys. The leading French squadron went down, man and horse, before it, and those following were thrown into disorder, as they tried to steer clear of the struggling mass. The British resumed their advance, meeting another charge in the same way, and at last overthrew the whole of the French cavalry. Two brigades of infantry vanished before them, and a body of Saxon troops was put



to flight. By ten o'clock, after about three hours' fighting, the whole French army was in flight, with the loss of 43 cannon, 10 pairs of colours, and 7 standards. The casualties of the Royal Welch Fusiliers were 207. The following appeared in General Orders next day :—" His Serene Highness orders his greatest thanks to be given to the whole army . . . particularly to the British infantry and the two Battalions of Hanoverian Guards. . . . His Serene Highness declares publicly that, next to God, he attributes the glory of the day to the intrepidity and extraordinary good behaviour of these troops, which, he assures them, he shall retain the strongest sense of as long as he lives."

The war went on with success until 1762, when a treaty was signed at Fontainebleau, whereby, among other advantages, Canada was finally secured for Britain. One or more of the six British infantry regiments, which fought at Minden, passed through some rose gardens during the battle, and their men plucked the roses and put them in their hats. These regiments to this day wear roses in their headdress each 1st of August. The Royal Welch passed through no rose garden, so far as is known, but the share they took in this glorious exploit of the British infantry can be imagined from the fact that, fifty years later, the official historian, in seeking to describe the bravery of the 90th Foot in the victorious campaign in Egypt of 1801, says :—" The discipline and steadiness of the 90th Regiment were most honourable and praiseworthy ; and if even the charge of the French had been more vigorous, their intrepidity and firmness would have rivalled the conduct of the Welch Fusiliers at the Battle of Minden."

NOTE.—The loose formations of the present-day battle had no place at the time of Minden. Everyone fought in close order, and had a particular place in the line by right. The post of honour was on the right of the line. At Blenheim the British troops, who for years had not taken part in any big fight on the Continent, did not occupy the coveted position, but at Ramillies and thereafter, as a result no doubt of their prowess at Blenheim, they were invariably on the right. In the British forces the senior regiment of each line was on the extreme right, and the second senior on the extreme left. At Minden, therefore, the order from right to left of the regiments of the front line was as follows :—12th, 37th, 23rd ; and of the second line—20th, 51st, 25th.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, 1775-82—THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, 1793-1815.

FOR thirteen years following the Seven Years' War the Royal Welch enjoyed a spell of peace, and busied themselves with the usual peace routine. The *Gazeteer* for Monday, August 12th, 1771, describes a review of "the two royal regiments of English and Welch Fuzileers" by the King, and "they made a fine and very martial appearance, both regiments wearing black bearskin caps. These regiments of fuzileers are regiments that have distinguished themselves on all occasions, and their caps and other trophies were given them on that account. The Royal Regiment of Welch Fuzileers is as well known to all veterans in Europe as any regiment in their respective nations."

The General's inspection report of 1772 mentions that: "This regiment beats the grenadier march on all occasions," thus showing the antiquity of the Regimental March of the Royal Welch.

In 1775 began the struggle of the American Colonies for freedom from interference by the home government with their internal affairs, which lasted for seven years, and ended with the independence of the United States of America.

As usual, the Royal Welch were in the thick of the fighting, and they particularly distinguished themselves at the Battles of Bunker's Hill and Guildford Courthouse. The French having taken the ring on behalf of the Americans, a considerable amount of naval fighting took place, and, the 23rd having volunteered for service with the Fleet, three of their companies, which were in the *Renown*, *Preston*, and *Iris*, received the "most particular thanks" of Admiral Howe for their "spirited and gallant behaviour" in action and "the whole regiment for its conduct during the time it served on board the Fleet."

In 1781 on the surrender of Yorktown the 23rd were taken prisoners, but a contemporary diary tells us that: "Even the French General Officers, after the termination of the siege, gave the Royal Welch Fusiliers their unqualified approbation and praise for their intrepidity and firmness in repulsing the three attacks made by such vastly superior numbers on the redoubt, and could not easily believe that so few men had defended it."

In 1789 the French Revolution broke out, and within a few years all Europe was convulsed, and the French armies were sweeping over every land. At first, England's share in the fighting was limited to naval actions and small expeditions, such as those to Saint Domingo in

the West Indies, Ostend, North Holland, and Ferrol in Spain, in all of which the 23rd took part. Soon, however, a more important operation was undertaken.

Napoleon Bonaparte, who at the time of the Revolution was a lieutenant in the French Artillery, and who by his zeal and ability had made himself First Consul of France, fired by ambition to possess himself of the British Dominions in India had, as a first step, landed an army in Egypt. Before, however, his plans could be carried out, Admiral Nelson destroyed the French Fleet in Aboukir Bay at the Battle of the Nile, whereupon Napoleon abandoned his army and returned to France.

In 1800 an expedition under Sir Ralph Abercromby was sent to turn the French out of Egypt. Leaving Malta on December 20th, the transports reached Marmora Bay in Asia Minor on the 30th, where they remained until February 22nd, 1801. On March 2nd

**Landing in** Aboukir Bay was reached, but a heavy swell prevented  
**Egypt,** a landing until the 8th. After a row of six miles in  
**March 8th,** open boats under heavy fire, a landing was effected.  
**1801.** The 23rd, who were in Sir John Moore's Brigade, were  
the first to land, and with the 40th rushed up the

heights with almost magic energy—never firing a shot, but charging with the bayonet. The attack was successful, and the landing of the rest of the army was made. The French force was drawn up at the top of some sand-hills. Breaking them up and pursuing them, the Brigade next carried two hills in the rear, and then captured three cannon. The attack of the other troops being no less successful, the British were left in possession of the heights. This occurred on March 8th, 1801; and, on the 21st, 12,000 French attacked our army, but were driven off with heavy loss. The official despatch states:—"The Reserve (the 23rd belonged to the Reserve) against whom the principal attack of the enemy was directed, conducted themselves with unexampled spirit; they resisted the impetuosity of the French infantry, and repulsed several charges of cavalry." The battle was a complete victory, but General Abercromby was killed.

In recognition of their conduct the troops received the thanks of Parliament and permission to bear the Sphinx on their colours with the word "Egypt."

After the finish of operations in Egypt the 23rd  
**Martinique.** returned to Gibraltar, and thence to England. In  
**February 24th,** 1807 they took part in the Capture of Copenhagen, and  
**1809.** in 1808 were stationed in Nova Scotia. In January,  
1809, an expedition was sent to take the French Island  
of Martinique in the West Indies. The force arrived on January 29th,

and the Royal Welch Fusiliers landed at Robert Bay, on the north-east side. As soon as it was dark they began their march—the men dragging two cannon with them, as the horses had not recovered from the sea voyage. The Grenadier Company, with Colonel Ellis at their head, drove the enemy before them, down a narrow road between two sugar plantations, at the mouth of which the Grenadiers took post. Here they were attacked fiercely by the French, who returned again and again to the sound of their drums, but the attacks were beaten off, although the company lost 26 men. The remainder of the Battalion came up, and, after a sharp action, in which the 23rd lost upwards of 100 killed and wounded, the French retreated to Fort Bourbon. The first assault was unsuccessful. Colonel Ellis was then asked if he thought that his Grenadiers could be trusted to take the forts. He replied: "I will take the flints out of their firelocks, and they shall take them." Such was his confidence in his men. However, the garrison gave up the forts without a further attack being required, and on February 24th the island was in British possession. The casualties of the Royal Welch were 122.

NOTE.—The officers of the period: At the period spoken of in the above chapter and, indeed, up till about forty years ago, officers had to purchase their commissions and pay in addition for subsequent promotion. Colonel Henry Ellis, mentioned above, had a commission in the 89th Regiment purchased for him, when he was only about three months old, by his father, Colonel J. J. Ellis. The 89th "being disbanded a few months later, the baby was placed upon half pay, but brought on full pay again as ensign at the age of six in the 41st Foot." On April 6th, 1797, at the age of fourteen, he was appointed and actually served as a captain in the 23rd, which his father was then commanding. By that time the system of having an officers' mess was well established in the Royal Welch, and elaborate rules for it had been drawn up. Even in those days it was necessary to lay down that no dogs were "to be admitted into the mess room at any time" (May 7th, 1787). The breaking of mess property was discouraged by a fine in cash of double the value of the article, the only exception being that there was no fine for breaking a corkscrew, when actually drawing a cork, provided at least two of the mess were present to testify to the fact (November 25th, 1787). Economy had to be studied, since many officers were badly off. In the mess minutes of 1809 there appears the signature of a Captain Robert Barclay who is known to have engaged in the most wonderful feats of endurance for wagers. The most famous of these took place on Wednesday, May 31st, 1809, when, on Newmarket Heath, for a wager of 1,000 guineas a side, he walked 1,000 miles in 1,000 successive hours, one mile being walked in each hour. One thousand hours amounts to six weeks all but eight hours.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PENINSULAR WAR, 1808-14—THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN.

As part of Great Britain's share in the struggle to free Europe from the power of Napoleon, now Emperor of the French, it was decided to give help to the Portuguese and Spaniards.

In 1808 Spain was in the hands of Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, but bands of guerillas were still holding out in the mountains. Sir John Moore was ordered to march from Portugal to their assistance, and at the same time 10,000 men under General Baird were sent from home to reinforce him. Amongst the latter was the 2nd Battalion of the 23rd, raised in 1804. Disembarking at Corunna, and marching inland at once to join Moore, they reached Astorga, 150 miles from the coast, on November 22nd, 1808. There it was learnt that the Spaniards had been routed, and, shortly after, that Napoleon with 80,000 men was advancing in three columns to envelop and destroy the British forces. Moore quickly joined up with Baird, and ordered a retirement to the coast. And so, on December 24th, the famous retreat to Corunna began. The sufferings of the troops on the 150 miles march over snow-covered mountains were terrible, but, on January 11th, 1809, the goal

**Battle of  
Corunna,  
January 16th,  
1809.**

was reached, and the army stood at bay. On the 16th, Marshal Soult attacked them in their positions covering the port and city of Corunna, and was heavily defeated, although, unfortunately, Sir John Moore himself was mortally wounded in the moment when victory was assured. The 23rd formed part of the reserve during the battle, but on the next day, when the army embarked, the rearguard was commanded by Captain Thomas Fletcher of the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers. He and his Corporal were the last to leave the town. On their way to embark, and as they passed through the gates, Captain Fletcher turned and locked them. The key not turning very easily, they thrust in a bayonet and together managed it, and these keys are in the possession of his descendants to this day.

A few months after its return from Spain, the 2nd Battalion left home again for the Walcheren Expedition. Flushing, with its harbour and docks, was captured, but owing to fever the intended siege of Antwerp could not take place, and the troops were brought home. The 23rd were so weakened by sickness that they had to be taken in

wagons to the ships. Thus ended the war services of this 2nd Battalion of the Royal Welch, and in 1814 on the reduction of the army, it was disbanded. In December, 1810, the 1st Battalion, which, after the capture of Martinique, had returned to Nova Scotia, arrived at Lisbon and joined Wellington's Army. The 4th Division, to which it belonged, was soon afterwards sent with other troops under Beresford to recapture Badajoz, which had just fallen into the hands of the French. No sooner, however, did Marshal Soult learn of the danger threatening the fortress, than he marched from Seville to its relief. Beresford at once abandoned the siege, and, leaving the 4th Division to put his siege train and stores into safety, marched out to a position on the banks of the River Albuhera

to await Soult. On May 16th the French attacked, and, quickly driving back some Spanish troops on the Albuhera, Allied right, seized some high ground, which raked the May 16th, 1811. whole position. Two British counter-attacks failed, and the situation became so critical that retreat was nearly decided on. As a last resource the 4th Division, which had only rejoined Beresford at 7.30 that morning, was brought up, and, in the words of Napier in his history of the war :—

“ Such a gallant line issuing from the midst of the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confusion and broken multitude, startled the enemy's heavy masses, which were increasing and pressing forward as to an assured victory ; they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed ; Cole and Colonels Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkeshaw fell wounded ; and the Fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships. Suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult by voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order ; their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in front ; their measured tread shook the ground ; their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation ; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as, foot by foot, and with a horrible carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves, joining with the struggling multitude, endeavour to sustain the fight ; their efforts only increased the confusion ; and the mighty mass, giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured



with blood, and 1,500 unwounded men, the remnant of 6,000 unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill." Sergeant David Scott was promoted ensign for his gallantry in action, this being the second recorded instance of a non-commissioned officer of the Royal Welch receiving his commission.

The British losses were terrible, those of the Royal Welch alone being 14 officers and 319 other ranks, and it is doubtful, if the army could have withstood a further onslaught next day, but the French had had enough and on May 18th they withdrew and left the siege of Badajoz to begin again.

In June, however, another French army, under Marmont, marching down from the north, caused Wellington once more to raise the siege, and, after some indecisive fighting, the British troops went into winter quarters in Portugal.

The campaign of 1812 was on a more ambitious scale. Hitherto, Wellington had to all intents and purposes confined himself to operations in Portugal and on its eastern frontiers, but now he aimed at carrying the war into Spain. Before he could do this, the barrier fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz had to be taken. The first named was invested on January 8th, and taken by storm on the night of the 19th. The 4th Division, although taking part in the siege, were not among the troops which carried out the actual assault.

On March 17th Badajoz was once more besieged, and, on April 6th, orders for an assault by four divisions were issued. Each division was provided with axes and ladders, and was preceded by a storming party of 500 men. On the signal being given, the 4th and Light Divisions moved forward, placed their ladders, and made for the breach. Unfortunately, the two divisions got so intermingled in the moat as to lose their formations, and suffered severely. Their attack failed, and Wellington ordered them to withdraw, but meanwhile, two other divisions succeeded in storming the fortress at another point, and Badajoz was won.

Sergeant James Ingram distinguished himself by carrying Major-General Colville, who was severely wounded, from the breach.

In June the advance into Spain began, and, by July 3rd, Wellington had reached the River Douro at a point over 100 miles from Ciudad Rodrigo. The river was in flood, and for fourteen days the armies stood facing each other, until suddenly Marmont, outwitting his opponent, crossed the Douro unopposed, and marched rapidly in the direction of Ciudad Rodrigo. The British countered this move by a retirement, and a race ensued between the armies, both going in the same direction. On July 22nd, Marmont had caught Wellington up just beyond Salamanca. and they were halted parallel to each other. At 3 p.m. word was brought

**Battle of Salamanca, July 22nd, 1812.** that the French van was moving away from the main body to block the British retreat. Wellington at once sent a division to smash the van, and launched the rest of his army in an attack on the main body. The 4th Division, with the 23rd in the front line, worked forward under heavy artillery fire to the first position, drove the enemy out, and, pressing on, captured the second and took 18 guns. A French counter-attack dislodged them and retook the guns, but, with the arrival of the 6th Division and success in other parts of the field, the whole French army was driven off, and by 10 p.m., had vanished into the darkness. The beaten foe was vigorously pursued and Madrid was entered, but on the arrival of the enemy reinforcements, Wellington withdrew once more into winter quarters in Portugal.

In May, 1813, the effort to free Spain was resumed. **Battle of Vittoria, June 21st, 1813.** Advancing out of Portugal, the British rapidly pushed the French back to the River Ebro, where Napoleon's brother was heavily defeated on June 21st at Vittoria, with the loss of all his guns and baggage. The pursuit of the beaten army was carried right to the Pyrenees, and Spain was thereby nearly cleared of the French. In a desperate effort to regain his footing in the country, Napoleon sent Soult with 80,000 men to force the Pyrenees passes, and, from July 25th to August 3rd, a bitter fight raged in the mountains, ending in the complete repulse of the French attacks. As a result of this struggle, the Royal Welch were reduced to a strength of only 108 bayonets, but Wellington himself in his account of the fighting on July 28th bears glowing testimony to their bravery:—

“In the course of the contest the gallant 4th Division, which had been so frequently distinguished in this army, surpassed their former good conduct. Every regiment charged with the bayonet, and the 40th, 7th, 20th, and 23rd, four different times.”

It was now possible to carry the war into France, and on October 7th the frontier was crossed. **Battle of Nivelle, October 10th, 1813.** Soult immediately took up a position behind the River Nivelle. Wellington would not press on and attack him until he had heard that the fortress of Pampeluna had fallen, but as soon as the good news was received, orders were issued by him for the storming of the redoubts, with which the French front was strengthened. On the morning of November 10th the attack began, and the 4th Division successfully assaulted the redoubts of St. Barbe and Grenada in front of Sarre, and, with the 7th Division, carried that village and the heights behind. It was later launched

against the enemy's centre, and, in combination with other divisions, succeeded in driving him from the position, which he had fortified with so much labour.

**Battle of  
Orthes,  
February 27th,  
1814.** The Battle of Orthes followed on February 27th, 1814, and again the French were ejected from a carefully selected position. Indeed, in this case it was thought to be well-nigh impregnable. Once more the 4th Division was in the forefront, being ordered to capture the village of St. Boes, and, together with the 7th Division, to turn the enemy's right. St. Boes was taken, but, though five attempts were made to get at the position beyond, the ridge, on which it was situated, was too narrow for the troops to deploy. The 3rd and 6th Divisions were then ordered to attack the French left, who then abandoned the heights, and, being charged by the cavalry during their retirement, broke into a rout, thousands deserting and throwing away their equipment.

On March 12th Bordeaux was occupied, and on April 10th the last battle of the campaign was fought, in the neighbourhood of Toulouse, and that city captured. Of the conduct of the 4th Division on that occasion Wellington writes in his despatch :—"The 4th Division conducted themselves with their usual gallantry." As the army entered the city the news quickly spread that Napoleon had abdicated and that the war was at an end. By the terms of the armistice the Emperor was allowed to possess and rule the little island of Elba in the Mediterranean for life, provided he did not leave it.

Such an existence was, of course, far too dull for a man of Napoleon's ambitions. France soon became restive under the feeble rule of the monarchy which had been restored to her, the Allies began to quarrel at the Peace Conference at Vienna, and, while they were wrangling, the news came that the Emperor had landed in France, and was marching on Paris. His old soldiers flocked to him, the French king fled to Brussels, and the Allied diplomats and generals dispersed to their countries to prepare to meet again the danger they had hoped was over for ever.

No country would trust Napoleon's promises to keep the peace, so war was declared on him at once by Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Hastily the Allies reassembled their armies, and prepared to march from all directions on Paris. But Napoleon was quicker than they. He knew that his only chance lay in going for his enemies before they had time to combine. He chose the British and Prussian armies for his first blow, since they were the closest to him, being quartered in Belgium from Ostend to Liège.

On June 15th, 1815, he arrived at Charleroi and crossed the River Sambre. On the 16th, having sent off Marshal Ney with orders to

fend off the British and to seize the cross-roads and high ground at Quatre Bras on the Brussels road, he attacked and defeated Blücher and his Prussians at Ligny. Luckily, Ney was late in starting, and slow in moving, and the stubborn resistance of a few Dutch and British troops at Quatre Bras gave Wellington time to collect his scattered forces.

By an arrangement between the two Marshals,  
**Battle of** Wellington retired on the 17th to Waterloo, and Blücher  
**Waterloo,** in his retreat drew in towards the British. Still, on  
**June 18th, 1815.** June 18th, when the Battle of Waterloo opened, the Prussians were as yet far away, and the red squares, drawn up mostly on the reverse slope of a low ridge, were alone opposite the enemy.

The night had been full of misery for both sides, rain having drenched the troops to the skin, and perhaps that circumstance, coupled with the fact that Napoleon desired to review his men before the fight, was responsible for the late commencement. In any case, it was not until ten minutes to twelve that Prince Jerome and General Foy led off by launching their men against the positions on the British right flank in and around the farm of Hougomont. There the fight raged all day, the buildings changing hands time after time right up to 8 p.m., but, while this struggle was in progress, a second blow was aimed at the British centre and left, against which Ney despatched 20,000 infantry in four close columns. This stroke, in spite of local successes, did not bring Napoleon the victory, and at 4 p.m. he made another effort to break Wellington's right, by launching forty squadrons of cavalry against the British squares. Charge after charge was beaten off with heavy loss, and eventually the horsemen desisted.

As the day wore on the Prussians began to pour up and to press more and more against the French right, and Napoleon knew that he must win quickly or all was lost. Orders were given by him for the veterans of the Old Guard to deliver a decisive attack, but even they could not prevail against those dogged squares of British infantry, and, being received with a heavy and unexpected flanking fire, broke and retired in disorder. No choice was left now to Napoleon but to retreat before the triumphant counter-attack of the British, and soon his army was flying in disorder. The Emperor himself galloped from the field, got into his carriage, and drove to Paris, whence he later proceeded to the coast and surrendered to H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, which brought him to England. He was then kept a prisoner on the Island of St. Helena until his death.

The following, written by an officer of the 23rd, who was present at the battle, gives a clear idea of their prowess on this glorious day :—

“ During the night of June 17th the 23rd bivouacked in a rye-field near the village of Merbe Braine, but early the following morning moved

into the second line on the left of the Nivelles road in rear of a battalion of Guards, where the Regiment deployed into line and lay on the ground, in consequence of the French having placed some guns on the Nivelles road, which killed one of our captains and wounded some men. The Guards in the front line having been withdrawn to the support of Hougoumont, the 23rd formed square and moved up into that line. In consequence of the numerous attacks of cavalry we remained in square the whole day. I only recollect one attack of infantry (in column) during the day, which did not alter our formation. Some regiment in our rear—I think the 71st—deployed into line and advanced with the 23rd square (a wing on each flank) some distance down the slope of the hill. The infantry having given way, a charge of cavalry immediately followed. The Regiment in line ran into square to our right, a little in advance and nearer to the garden of Hougoumont.

“I believe the cavalry that attacked these two squares were nearly annihilated. Having suffered much from the squares they attempted to retreat by the Nivelles road, which was thickly lined with skirmishers, and the officer who commanded the left company of the Regiment stationed on that road assured me at the time that scarcely a man succeeded in making his escape.

After this charge, finding that we were suffering both from the French guns and from the garden of Hougoumont, we again retired to our former position, where we remained until the attack on the centre by the French Guards, when we again advanced some short distance in square, then deployed and advanced in line, but, finding nothing to oppose us, we wheeled by companies to the right, and moved in column on the right of the Charleroi road to about —, where we bivouacked for the night, and, on the following morning, retraced our steps and rejoined the two other regiments of the Brigade, and marched upon Cambray by the Nivelles road.”

The Regiment was in Colonel Mitchell's Brigade of the 4th Division, and received many congratulations on its conduct. Lieutenant-General Lord Hill, in thanking the troops for the brilliant victory won, wrote :— “The highly distinguished conduct of the 2nd Division and Colonel Mitchell's Brigade of the 4th Division meet his Lordship's fullest approbation,” whilst a few days later Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Colville “could not deny himself the satisfaction of adding to those of Lord Hill his most hearty congratulations. . . . From every statement it appears that the 23rd and 51st Regiments acted fully up to their former high character.” Those who have read so far the history of the Royal Welch, know how much is meant by the words “their former high character” ; and, indeed, it must have been a fine body of men which took the field on that memorable June 18th, since Wellington himself, but a fortnight before

the battle, in reply to a request from Sir Lowry Cole (their divisional commander in the Peninsula), that the Royal Welch might be transferred to his Division wrote :—

“ I saw the 23rd the other day, and I never saw any regiment in such order. They were not strong but it was the most complete and handsome military body I ever looked at. I shall find it very difficult to get General Colville to part with it. . . . ”

To the grief of the whole Regiment they lost their Colonel, Sir Henry Ellis, who, being wounded severely and feeling faint, rode calmly through the square to the rear. While leaping a ditch on his way, he fell from his horse. Here he was found, and taken to a shed. This took fire on the 19th, and, though he was rescued, he died from the effect of these many shocks. He had succeeded to the command when he was 27 ; he led the 23rd in Martinique, and throughout the Peninsular War and was eight times wounded.

A handsome monument was erected to his memory, which may be seen in Worcester Cathedral.

NOTE.—The soldiers of the period : We are indebted to Mr. Howel Thomas, the author of “ A History of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers ” (T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1916), for some wonderful sidelights on the soldier of the Peninsular War. In his preface he tells us that some seventy years ago, when a boy at Carnarvon, he used often to meet a veteran Royal Welchman, called “ Hugh General ” who entertained him and his school-mates with stories of battles, sieges, and weary marches. “ Hugh gloated, for instance, over the exploit that gained for him his cognomen. He began the tale by describing how his boots had been worn by incessant marching over rough country, over rocks, and through rivers, and how he was forced to cut off a portion of the tail of his coat to wrap round his feet. ‘ I could not stand it any longer,’ said he, ‘ so I swore that I would get a pair of sound boots at the next battle, come what may. Well, I saw my chance at the next fight. A French general with a fine pair of long boots came within range, and I shot him. That night, at the risk of my neck, I prowled about the battlefield until I found my man, and took off his boots, which I cut down and wore for many a day. My officers knew nothing about it, but my comrades so often joked me about my *general*, that the name stuck to me.’ ”

Mr. Thomas goes on to say :—“ I distinctly remember one day when the old fellow sat, as was his custom, in fine weather, on some timber near to the steps of the Castle, the group of boys around him. One of us asked him how he felt during the charge of the Fusiliers at Albuhera. A singular change came over him. The aged man seemed to vanish before our eyes, and in his place a resolute soldier stood up, and bending forward

with his staff at the charge, stared intently at something in front of him, visualized to his ken by the recollection of the famous battle. Presently he shouted 'Teimlo ! 'roeddwn yn teimlo fy mod yn mynd ar fy mhen i'r Uffern, a'r diawl oedd ynddi ; 'roeddwn am gymmeryd fy ngelyn yno gyda mi.' (Felt ! I felt that I was about to plunge headlong into hell, and the devil was in it ; I was for taking my foe there with me.)"

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CRIMEAN WAR, 1854-1855—THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-1858.

THE victory at Waterloo, and the collapse of Napoleon, gave Great Britain a rest from any big war for nearly forty years. Unfortunately, however, in place of the ambitions of France to rule the world, there arose a danger from the power of Russia, which country, under the rule of Nicholas I, aimed at crushing Turkey and possessing herself of Constantinople. At length, in 1853, the Russians, using a dispute over the guardianship of the Holy Places as a pretext for hostile action, invaded Turkish territory, and in the same year the Sultan declared war. England and France ranged themselves on Turkey's side, and each sent slightly more than 25,000 men to Constantinople with the object of helping the Sultan to free his country of the enemy, and of destroying Sevastopol, the great Russian fortress on the shores of the Black Sea.

The Royal Welch embarked at Southampton in April, 1854, and, disembarking at Scutari, joined the Light Division under Sir George Brown. The first move was to Varna in Bulgaria, in which country the troops remained for two months, and suffered severely from cholera, caused by the disgraceful arrangements made for feeding them, aggravated by the almost complete absence of medical stores. Fortunately for our men, the Turks drove the Russians off without allied help, and at last, in September, 1854, the British and French sailed for the Crimea.

On September 14th, the landing commenced, the first troops to reach the beach being No. 1 Company of the 23rd, under Major Lysons. On the 19th the advance on Sevastopol began, the Light Division, headed by the 23rd, leading, and, when the Allies halted that evening, the Russian army was found to be in position on the other side of the River Alma, its bivouac fires in full view of our troops. On the morning of the 20th, the French and British moved forward to the attack, the British on the left, having the 2nd and Light Divisions in the first line, backed up by the 3rd and 1st Divisions in second line, with the 4th Division in reserve.

From the hills beyond the Alma, at the top of a bare slope devoid of cover, there frowned a large redoubt armed with 14 heavy guns and protected by some 16 battalions of infantry, whilst between the Light



Division and the river bed stretched a series of gardens and vineyards, bounded by walls, and manned by the enemy's skirmishers. Nothing daunted, our men swept through the enclosures, and, though they lost their formation, reached the river bed without great loss.

The banks were steep and quite ten feet high in places, thus giving cover from the Russian artillery, but the skirmishers still gave trouble, and before the 23rd could reform an enemy column was close at hand. Captain Conolly of the Regiment, springing up on to the bank and calling on his men to follow him, was shot dead at once, but General Codrington, jumping his horse up, led the troops forward against the dark grey masses. Soon the Russian columns gave way, and the British poured after them to seize the redoubt.

Before the position was reached the officer carrying the Regimental Colour was killed, and Colonel Chester, who had already had his horse shot under him, picked it up. He had not gone more than a few yards before he also was struck down, and at the close of the battle the Regimental Colour, with sixteen bullet holes in it, was eventually carried out of action by Sergeant Henry Smith.

Ensign Anstruther, carrying the Queen's Colour, was the first to reach the redoubt. He was killed as he topped the parapet. Private Williams Evans raised the Colour and later handed it to Corporal Luby, who in turn yielded it to Sergeant Luke O'Connor. This gallant soldier, who but a moment before had been severely wounded in the shoulder, carried the Colour for a great part of the day, and behaved with such bravery that he won his commission in the Royal Welch as an officer, and was one of the first recipients of the Victoria Cross. The Queen's Colour was pierced twenty-six times by bullets and, in addition, the staff was badly broken by a bullet. Fired by the example of such heroes, the remainder pressed on, and soon the whole of the redoubt was won. The enemy had succeeded in removing all but one of their heavy guns before our men were in the redoubt, but Captain Bell, dashing forward, and pointing an empty pistol at the head of the driver of the last gun, the latter jumped from his horse and fled. Captain Bell turned the horses round, and started them back towards his own company, himself afterwards taking over the command of the battalion in place of Colonel Chester, who had been killed. The gun was brought home, and is at the Regimental Depot at Wrexham to this day, while Captain Bell for his gallantry on this occasion and throughout the day was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The 23rd and other regiments, on entering the redoubt, spread out through it, and a Corporal of the 23rd, finding himself alone in a battery, where there was a disabled howitzer, bayoneted three Russians before anyone else entered the battery. For this he was promoted Sergeant.





The redoubt having been cleared, the Light Division continued their advance, pouring volley after volley into the retreating enemy. The Russians, however, counter-attacked with 3,000 men of the Vladimir Regiment, and unfortunately, a mounted officer, believed to have been one of the staff, shouted out: "The column is French! For God's sake don't fire!" The enemy poured a volley into our troops and six officers of the 23rd fell on the spot. Next came an order by bugle to retire, which was taken up all down the line. "At first the remaining officers of the 23rd declined to go back, feeling confident that there was some mistake, but, as it was repeated several times down the whole line, they had no alternative but to give the hated command. The redoubt fell into the hands of the Russians once more."

As the sorely tried Light Division retired down the slope again towards the Alma, they met the 1st Division advancing to support them. The Light Division then rallied behind the 1st and formed the second line in the recapture of the redoubt. This being the key of the whole position, the Russians now began to withdraw all along the line.

During the action the Regimental Colour of the 7th Fusiliers was found lying on the ground by Captain Pearson of that regiment, aide-de-camp to Sir George Brown. He picked it up, and no officer of the 7th being near, General Codrington desired him to give it to Captain Bell, observing: "It cannot be in safer keeping than that of the Royal Welch." The Colour was accordingly placed between those of the 23rd and was carried by a sergeant of the 7th during the remainder of the action. The casualties of the 23rd were 9 officers and 44 other ranks killed, and 4 officers and 154 other ranks wounded. Sergeant Luke O'Connor, as Lieutenant O'Connor, was again wounded in the assault on the Redan; fought in the Indian Mutiny; later took part in the Ashantee Campaign of 1874 as a major; commanded the 2nd Battalion as a lieutenant-colonel; retired as an honorary major-general; was rewarded with the K.C.B. by H.M. King George V, and died as Colonel of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1915.

The Allies did not pursue the beaten enemy until September 23rd, when they resumed their advance on Sevastopol. On the 25th they came on the baggage guard of a Russian column. As soon as possible it was attacked by the Horse Artillery and portions of the 8th and 11th Hussars, supported by the Light Division, the 23rd leading the column. The Russians broke and the baggage became the lawful booty of the victors.

The neighbourhood of Sevastopol having been reached in the last few days of September, the troops were soon hard at work digging trenches and constructing batteries for a regular siege of the place.

The Russians had, however, no intention of allowing the fortress to be reduced without a struggle, and they attacked vigorously but

without success, on October 12th, 25th, and 26th. On November 5th they made a most determined effort, which came within an ace of victory.

**Battle of  
Inkerman,  
November 5th,  
1854.**

When dawn broke, there was a dense fog, and no one could see further than a yard or two. The British piquets, however, could hear a rumbling as of wheels, and, soon after, fire was opened and great grey masses of Russians came suddenly out of the fog. The piquets were forced back and there was barely time to get the army into position. The struggle lasted nearly all day, charge and counter-charge being delivered with the bayonet until about 1.40 p.m., when the enemy commenced to retire. So serious was the situation at one time, that an officer was sent back to the camp of the Light Division to turn out all the employed, the men on guard, and any of the sick, who could carry arms. Lieutenant-Colonel Lysons of the 23rd, who was recovering from fever, got up and took command of this party, and the Royal Welch turned out over 60 men, every man who could stand volunteering to go out. From the fact that the sudden attack of the enemy and the difficulty of locating the troops in the fog made it impossible to make any plan, or send out proper orders for the fight, the Battle of Inkerman has been well called "The Soldier's Battle." It was a test of stubbornness and endurance, in which even the dogged courage of the Russian could not prevail against the British infantryman.

The terrible Russian winter set in soon after, and the troops suffered the most appalling hardships. So cold was it, that in January, 1855, the hair on the men's faces was often covered with icicles, and no less than 96 of the Royal Welch alone succumbed during the month to cold and scanty food. As soon, however, as spring came round, the men recovered their health, and were as brisk and smart as ever. Nor could they at any time have allowed the bad conditions to affect their conduct, for, by the end of March, 1855, apart from the Victoria Crosses gained by Sergeant O'Connor and Captain Bell, no less than 16 non-commissioned officers and men had been awarded silver medals, with gratuities, for distinguished conduct in the field, and two officers received brevet majorities.

The siege dragged on right through the summer, and two more Royal Welchmen were awarded gratuities by the Divisional Commander for gallantry. Lieutenant-Colonel Lysons also was made a C.B. and a brevet colonel.

**Assault on  
the Redan,  
September 8th,  
1855.**

At last, on September 8th, the final assault on the fortress was made. At 12 noon on that day the French suddenly attacked the fort called the Malakoff, surprising the Russians, who were at dinner. This point having been taken, the British, according to plan, were to assault the Redan. The signal was given, and the

different parties crossed the space of 285 yards between the fifth parallel and the edge of the Redan. This was only accomplished at great loss, and, although they fixed the ladders, carried the advanced angle of the work, and even penetrated the third and fourth embrasure, they were then stopped by the terrific fire of the enemy. Five companies of the Royal Welch were then ordered to attack the right flank of the Redan. At the word of command they jumped over the parapet of their trenches and advanced in line in splendid style, all the officers in front waving their swords and cheering on their men. These companies continued to advance until they approached the re-entrant angle, where the fire became so intense that it was impossible for the majority to move further. The enemy's guns on the flank were throwing grape and canister in their teeth, and Russian infantry on the face of the Redan were firing down on to their right shoulders. Fourteen out of eighteen officers were hit, and over 97 other ranks had fallen. The remainder, not being sufficient to make an attack, fell back into the trenches. Some did, however, get across the ditch—and died fighting there on the parapet of the Redan. The attack had failed. The following were the casualties of the 23rd :— Killed, 1 officer and 41 other ranks ; wounded, 15 officers and 143 other ranks. Of the wounded officers, four died afterwards of their wounds.

Assistant-Surgeon Sylvester, Royal Welch Fusiliers, gained the Victoria Cross for going out under a galling fire and dressing the wounds of Lieutenant and Adjutant Dyneley, who was lying right under the Russian work. At dusk Captain Drewe, Lance-Corporal Shields, Privates Aherne, Taylor, Green, and Kennedy went out and carried the wounded officer in ; and his servant, Private Thomas Harris, who had remained faithfully with him the whole of the time, came in with them. Corporal Shields was awarded the Victoria Cross and French Legion of Honour, and the others received rewards.

During the night following this attack the Russians blew up their forts, and the siege of Sevastopol was at an end. The Crimean War was over soon after, and the troops returned to England in July, 1856.

The Royal Welch lost—killed in action, died of wounds, or disease—20 officers and 737 other ranks. Memorials have been raised to their memory at Carmarthen, and in St. Mary's Church at Chester, but it is in the Regiment, to which they belonged, that their brightest memorial shall always be found, where their achievements can never be forgotten.

The Royal Welch Fusiliers were not to remain peacefully in England for long, as in February, 1857, war broke out in China, and they were ordered to embark for active service. In May, however, a revolt began among the native regiments of the Indian Army. The outbreak has been ascribed to various causes, but there is no doubt that for some time past a conspiracy had been at work to undermine the loyalty of the

sepoys, so as to pave the way for the removal of British rule from India. A lying rumour, that a mixture of cow and pig fat was purposely being used to grease bullets, in order to break the sepoys' caste, proved to be the spark which started the blaze.

The rising began on May 10th, 1857, at Meerut, 20 miles north of Delhi. The mutineers, after brutally murdering the helpless Europeans, made for Delhi, where the descendant of the Great Mogul was proclaimed Emperor of India. From Delhi the mutiny spread quickly to Allahabad, and by the end of June twenty-two stations were involved. Not only that, but everywhere the native troops made the name of sepoy infamous by the brutality and treachery with which they outraged and murdered the captured women and children.

The 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers were intercepted at Capetown and ordered to Calcutta, where they disembarked in September and November, 1857. Six out of the first companies to arrive joined

**Relief of Lucknow, 1857.** the field force which was trying to relieve the small British garrison besieged by thousands of rebels in the Residency at Lucknow.

The Secundra Bagh, a high-walled enclosure some 120 yards square, which lay to the south-east of the Residency, was attacked on the 16th, and carried by storm. The 23rd, although present and suffering casualties, did not take part in the actual assault, but took their share of the fighting that occurred during the next two days in the same neighbourhood, and gained two more Victoria Crosses. On the left of the British position at Secundra Bagh a corporal of the 23rd was lying in the open ground outside the bungalow occupied by Brigadier Russell. The man was badly wounded. Lieutenant Hackett of the 23rd came forward and called for volunteers to assist him in getting in the wounded man. Lieutenant Harrington, and Gunners Ford and Williams immediately came forward. They left the house, crossed the road exposed to heavy musketry fire, brought in the corporal, and with them No. 5202 Band Boy George Monger of the 23rd, who had remained the whole time with, and attended to the wounded man, the boy bringing in the rifle of the corporal. For their bravery on this occasion both Lieutenant Hackett and Boy Monger received the Victoria Cross.

From November 19th to 22nd an incessant fire from the batteries was kept up on the Kaiser Bagh, and the rebels expected an assault on their stronghold there, but under cover of this fire preparations went forward for the evacuation of the Residency, and on the night of the 22nd the garrison and all the women and children were safely got out. The Royal Welch were ordered to hold on to their position until the last had gone by, and then to cover the retirement. This they carried out with such quiet and discipline that the enemy suspected nothing, and during

the whole operation fired but one shot. By 1 a.m. on the 23rd the Brigade, to which the Royal Welch belonged, was assembled in the Martiniere Park, and after helping to escort the women, children and sick into safety, took part in the advance on and capture of Cawnpore. While they were in the act of piling arms in the rebels' camp there, after the fight was over, a party of enemy with three guns suddenly opened fire on the 23rd. Two companies were sent out at once, and on arriving within 200 yards of the guns, were ordered to double, and simply raced for them. Colour-Sergeant Knightley, who afterwards became Quartermaster, was the first to reach the guns. He at once scratched on them with his bayonet "No. 3 Company, Royal Welch Fusiliers." These guns were long known as No. 3 Company's guns, but are not in the possession of the Regiment to-day.

After the taking of the rebels' camp at Cawnpore various minor operations were carried out, which involved moves to Fatehgarh, Firzabad, Berrar, and other places, and on March 2nd, 1858, Sir Colin Campbell, who had now 20,000 men under him, commenced a fresh advance on Lucknow.

The Royal Welch Fusiliers reached the Dilkusha Park on the 3rd, and on the 5th crossed the Gumti River, with the 3rd Division, by a pontoon bridge. The period from March 6th to 15th was taken up with a steady advance up the left bank into the suburbs of Lucknow. By the 16th a bridge of casks had been thrown across the Gumti opposite the Secundra Bagh, and that morning Douglas's Brigade, with the 23rd in it, recrossed to the right bank. As the Brigade approached the Kaiser Bagh, Sir Colin Campbell rode out and personally instructed General Outram to take the Residency and the iron bridge across the river, and thence to move on the Machi Bawan and the Great Imambara palace. What followed is briefly described by Sir James Outram in the following words :—

"I immediately ordered the advance and took possession of the Residency, with little opposition, the 23rd Fusiliers charging through the gateway, and driving the enemy before them at the point of the bayonet, the remainder of the brigade following them in reserve. The enemy having been dislodged from the Residency, two companies of the 23rd under Lieutenant-Colonel Bell pressed rapidly forward, and captured the brass gun which was in position to sweep the iron bridge, after some opposition." On the 17th the Great Imambara was occupied, on the 19th the Musa Bagh, held by some 5,000 rebels, was attacked and taken, and on the 21st the last body of rebels was expelled from Lucknow. The Regiment took part in the remainder of the fighting until the Mutiny was suppressed, and the late General Sir Edward Bulwer was mentioned



in despatches for the "brilliant manner" in which he conducted operations. Lieutenant-Colonel Wells was awarded the C.B. and the honour "Lucknow" was granted by Queen Victoria to be borne on the Colours.

NOTE.—The incident of the carrying of the Colour of the Royal Fusiliers between the Colours of the Royal Welch Fusiliers described above, is in all probability the origin of the privilege enjoyed by the officers of the two regiments of being honorary members of each others messes. Apart from the Battle of the Alma, however, it is remarkable to note how very often the two corps have fought side by side. At Namur in 1695 they were in the same brigade. In 1702 we find both among the three original Fusilier regiments. At Charlottetown, in 1780, in the War of American Independence, they are in the same column. In the capture of Martinique they are side by side. Near Lisbon, in 1810, the two regiments are brigaded together, and fight throughout the remainder of the Peninsular War as the Fusilier Brigade, notably at Albuhera; and much later, in the South African War, we find them together again in a Fusilier Brigade and closely associated. Small wonder, then, that they look upon each other as sister regiments!

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FORMATION OF THE 2ND BATTALION—ASHANTEE, 1874—BURMA, 1885-1887—HAZARA, 1891.

THE Indian Mutiny caused an increase in the British Army, and it was at this time that the present 2nd Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers was raised. A certain number of men were transferred from the 1st Battalion, and in June, 1858, recruiting parties were sent out to various towns in Wales. Lieutenant-Colonel Bell, V.C., one of the heroes of the Alma, took over command in the same month, and the Battalion was stationed at Newport (Mon.), until December, when it was moved to Aldershot.

Then followed a tour of service in Malta, Gibraltar, and Canada, whence it returned to Newport and Brecon, and from there, in 1869, back to Aldershot.

The first active service seen by the Battalion was in 1874. In 1873 the King of Ashantee had invaded the territory of tribes friendly to the British on the Gold Coast, and had taken prisoner several British subjects, both European and native. Three British battalions, one of which was the 2nd Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, were selected by His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, to go to Ashantee to help the local forces to free these captives, and to punish the Ashantees.

The Royal Welch, who were then at the Curragh, embarked on November 21st at Queenstown under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Savage Mostyn, and arrived at Cape Coast Castle on December 29th, only to find that the arrangements for landing were not complete. The ship was, therefore, sent off for a short cruise, returning on January 5th, 1874. On disembarking, great difficulty was experienced in obtaining baggage-carriers, and the Royal Welch, being the last of the three regiments to arrive, were the most affected, as, first of all, owing to half their coolies having run away during the preceding night, it was only possible to land half the Battalion, and, when that half Battalion reached Accrofol, it had to halt and finally to return to the coast, since its coolies were required to replace those of other troops in front, whose carriers had also deserted. Disappointment at being prevented from taking part in the campaign was great, and the whole Battalion—officers and men—volunteered to act as carriers to the force, if they could but go up country. This request could not be acceded to,

but Sir Garnet Wolseley, the Commander of the Expedition, ordered Battalion Headquarters and 100 men under Lieutenant-Colonel Mostyn to disembark, with a wing of the Black Watch, and join the column, which was to march on Coomassie, the Ashantee capital. The greater part of the route lay through a dense jungle, so overhung with trees and creeping plants as to make it a hotbed of fever.

Little fighting was experienced until Amoafu was reached, but there a severe attack was made on the little force by a large body of unseen enemy. The Royal Welch Fusiliers greatly distinguished themselves by their gallantry in clearing the bush at the point of the bayonet. After four more days of fighting, less severe in character, Coomassie was entered on February 4th, 1874, and burned to the ground, after which our troops immediately returned to the coast and embarked before the dreaded rainy season came on.

The casualties of the 2nd Battalion in the campaign were :—Killed, 2 privates ; wounded, 2 officers and 5 privates ; died of disease, 1 officer, 4 privates, and the Regimental Goat ; but many were invalided home as a result of the noxious effects of the climate. Lieutenant-Colonel Mostyn was awarded the C.B., and, with three other officers of the Royal Welch, was mentioned in despatches. Colour-Sergeant Elphick, Sergeant Attiwell, and Private Gunnings were granted medals for "Distinguished Conduct in the Field."

On its return the 2nd Battalion received a most enthusiastic welcome from the people of Portsmouth, who presented it with a goat, and it was reviewed by Queen Victoria in Windsor Park. The honour "Ashantee, 1873-74" was granted and is borne on the Colours of the Regiment.

The year 1874 was marked by another Royal Review, in honour of the Emperor Alexander of Russia. It took place at Aldershot, where the 1st Battalion was stationed, and the 2nd Battalion was brought from Shorncliffe by train for the day. This was the first occasion on which the two battalions had met. The Tsar rode down the line with His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge, and, as he reached the 1st Battalion he noticed the tattered state of their Colours. Turning to the Commander-in-Chief, the Tsar asked him the reason, whereupon His Royal Highness informed him that they were the Colours carried in the Crimean War, where they had been much torn. The Tsar's feelings can only be imagined, but he turned and gravely saluted them. In 1880, both Battalions being still at home, the officers of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and of the Depot, dined together at Woolwich on St. David's Day. On July 29th of that year, as a result of the British defeat by the Afghans at Maiwand, the 1st Battalion was suddenly ordered to embark for India for active service. On August 16th, just before they embarked

at Portsmouth, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) who was accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, presented the Battalion with new Colours to replace those which had been carried in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny, and at the conclusion of the ceremony, by desire of His Royal Highness, the old Colours were carried under escort to the Royal Yacht *Osborne*, and there placed on the quarter-deck. When the troopship *Malabar* left with the Battalion on board, Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales in the *Osborne*, and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh in his yacht, steamed out on either side of her, and accompanied the Royal Welch for over an hour.

The new Colours presented that day are those now (1924) in use, and at the Regimental Depot there may be seen, carefully preserved, fragments of the old Colours, which had become detached prior to the presentation of the new set.

The crisis caused by Maiwand passed without the Royal Welch being actually employed, and for a time peace soldiering occupied their attention. In 1882, they were minutely inspected by the Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir Donald Stewart, who remarked to Colonel Elgee, the Commanding Officer : " Yours is a magnificent battalion, one of the finest bodies of men I have ever seen." In April, 1885, the 1st Battalion was again ordered to " prepare at once for active service," this time to meet a Russian threat against the safety of India ; but once more the clouds cleared away. A telegram, however, received on October 23rd of the same year, " to be prepared for embarkation at a moment's notice " did result in active service in Burma.

Towards the end of 1885 a quarrel arose between the Indian Government and Theebaw, King of Burma. Theebaw, a drunken tyrant, was accused of interfering with the rights of British merchants trading in his country. An Expeditionary Force, was, therefore, despatched from India to punish him, and the 1st Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers was one of the British units selected to join it.

Rangoon was reached on November 6th, and the troops were transferred to river steamers for the journey up the Irrawaddy. Although it was found necessary to land on more than one occasion to seize places of importance on the river banks, and a force of 5,000 Burmese had to be driven out of a position near Myngyan by gunfire, no serious opposition was met at first, and the expedition duly reached the fortress of Ava on November 26th. Ava was only a short distance from Mandalay, King Theebaw's capital, and here the whole enemy army was concentrated. Orders were issued for an attack to be delivered next day, but at about 5 p.m. a state barge floated down the river bearing envoys asking for an armistice. In reply, a demand for the surrender of the

King, his army, and his capital was made, and next day, just as the artillery was about to open fire, the demand was agreed to. The Burmese troops laid down their arms except for 2,000 men, who escaped and broke up into bands of outlaws, which for more than a year gave the utmost trouble to our soldiers in their efforts to restore order in the country. Mandalay was reached on the 28th, and on the following day

**Entry into** King Theebaw was removed from his palace, and,  
**Mandalay,** escorted by "B" Company of the Royal Welch, was  
 taken to a steamer for conveyance to India.

**November 28th,** From now onwards the Battalion was split up into  
**1885.** small columns, which were engaged in the arduous  
 task of hunting down bands of the enemy, and capturing  
 their walled towns and stockades, a task which they carried out to the  
 complete satisfaction of the General Officer Commanding.

Colonel Tilly, who was in command, was made a C.B., and Captain H. T. Lyle was awarded the D.S.O., whilst nine officers were mentioned in despatches. Casualties from enemy action were but few, viz., 4 rank and file killed or died of wounds; and 2 officers and 11 rank and file wounded; while 1 officer and 87 other ranks died of disease, and 10 officers and 341 other ranks were invalided from the country.

Three beautiful Burmese bells were brought away as trophies, one of which was sent to the 2nd Battalion and another to the Depot.

The honour "Burma, 1885," on their Colours records the services of the Royal Welch in this small war, and the India General Service Medal was awarded, and personally presented at Lucknow to all ranks who took part by the famous Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, V.C., who at the time was Commander-in-Chief in India.

Whilst the 1st Battalion was thus distinguishing itself abroad, the 2nd Battalion had been serving with credit at Pembroke Dock and in Ireland. In 1885 Colonel Luke O'Connor, V.C., finished his five years' term of command and his battalion gained distinction among battalions at home as "the best disciplined regiment, judging by the number of courts-martial, minor punishments, and desertions."

In 1889 not only did the whole Regiment celebrate the 200th anniversary of its formation, but the 1st Battalion won the Non-Commissioned Officers' Cup at the Bengal Presidency Rifle Association Meeting, and also the All-India Inter-Regimental Cup for Rifle Shooting. These successes were followed in 1890 by the winning of the Commander-in-Chief in India's Musketry Cup, and by "A" Company having the highest figure of merit of any company in Bengal. Probably as a result of their efficiency as a shooting regiment, the Royal Welch were selected in the autumn of 1890 to proceed to the frontier, and in the spring of

1891 had their first taste of frontier fighting, when they took part in the Hazara, Black Mountain Expedition.

The force concentrated at Darband, 16 miles north of Attock, on the Indus, and a start was made on March 12th. The story of the expedition is curiously similar to that of the expeditions of to-day. Villages were burnt, reconnaissances carried out, roads and water supplies constructed, and the troops suffered the hardships (mitigated to some extent by free rum issues) of wind, rain, hail, sleet, and thunderstorms, alternating with some very hot marches. On March 25th and 26th the Battalion took a prominent part in the capture of Darbaurai and Surmul, and in his despatch the Brigadier-General reported "no troops could have behaved more steadily or shown more eagerness to get to close quarters than the Royal Welch Fusiliers and 2/5th Gurkhas."

After the conclusion of the active operations the Royal Welch remained for a short time in occupation of the country and relieved the monotony of frontier life and working parties by gymkhanas and smoking concerts. No battle honour was awarded for the campaign, but all ranks were granted the India General Service Medal with the clasp "Hazara, 1891."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1899-1902.

So much heated argument has raged round the causes of and the necessity or otherwise for what has usually been called the Boer War, that it is still a difficult task to attempt a just account of them. South Africa had been colonized by Dutch farmers, and in course of time they had formed two republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, whose boundaries touched those of the British Colonies of Natal, Cape Colony, and Bechuanaland. The Dutchmen, or Boers, remained obstinately agricultural in their life, whereas in the British territories there developed powerful mining corporations, which spread their workings into the republics. The Boers, however, in their determination to retain the mastery in their own house, refused to grant any civil rights to British or other foreigners. This caused continual friction, which culminated in the notorious Jameson Raid of 1896, and the German Emperor's famous telegram of congratulation to President Kruger on the defeat of the raiders. It then became a question of Briton or Boer, and the latter strained every nerve to equip himself for an effort to drive the Briton out of South Africa.

At last, in the late summer of 1899, the military preparations of the Transvaal and Orange Free State became so serious that it was necessary to send reinforcements to Natal for the protection of that Colony, to which step President Kruger replied with an ultimatum demanding their withdrawal. The result was war. The Boer commandos at once invaded Natal, Bechuanaland, and even part of Cape Colony, and besieged Ladysmith, Mafeking, and Kimberley.

A large force was immediately prepared in England for despatch to the Cape, and one of the first units to be mobilized was the 1st Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, who were then at Pembroke Dock, having returned from India in December, 1897.

The original plan of marching straight on Bloemfontein and Pretoria, the two enemy capitals, having been put out of the question by the danger threatening Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking, the Royal Welch, with a large number of other troops, were sent round from Cape-town to Durban, the chief port of Natal. There they landed, and, proceeding by rail to Mooi River, joined the 6th (Fusilier) Brigade under General Barton, which also contained the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, and the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers.

In order to cover the siege of the British troops shut up in Ladysmith under Sir George White, V.C., the Boers had taken up a very strong position on the left (northern) bank of the River Tugela, which Sir Redvers Buller, the British Commander, would have to force before the town could be relieved. The first attempt to cross the river, and break through, was made on December 15th, at Colenso, and resulted in a costly failure, the Boers capturing several of our guns. In this battle the Royal Welch were not heavily engaged, and suffered but few casualties. Further efforts to relieve Ladysmith by way of Spion Kop and Vaal Krantz having proved equally fruitless, General Buller decided to make another attempt by seizing a hill called Hlangwane on the right bank, which had been discovered to command a large part of the Boer position. The battle opened on February 14th, 1900, the share of the 6th Brigade being the capture of Hussar Hill. By the 18th our troops had pushed forward sufficiently to allow the Fusiliers to rush Green Hill, and on the 19th the Royal Fusiliers and the Royal Welch occupied Hlangwane unopposed. This formed the turning point of the battle, and, had General Buller pushed on at once, the Boers, who were already in full retreat, would almost certainly have abandoned the siege of Ladysmith at once. The inaction of the British Commander, however, emboldened the enemy to reoccupy the high ground on the left bank, and made necessary a further struggle, which lasted from February 21st to 27th and cost many valuable lives.

At 6 p.m. on the 23rd the Royal Welch, together with the Royal Fusiliers, crossed the Tugela and relieved two battalions of another brigade on Horseshoe Hill. All next day the Battalion lay some 300 yards from the enemy exposed to so severe a fire, that it was impossible to raise a finger above the skyline without instantly attracting a hail of bullets. On this day the Royal Welch lost, among others, Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. H. Thorold, a Commanding Officer beloved by all ranks.

**Relief of  
Ladysmith,  
March 3rd,  
1900.**

On the 26th Lieutenant Salt and his machine gun detachment greatly distinguished themselves by keeping their gun in action under a heavy close range fire, by which the non-commissioned officer, and the No. 1 of the detachment, No. 4085 Corporal W. Roberts, and Private Clarke, were dangerously wounded. Lieutenant Salt then worked the gun by himself until the foresight was shot away, and the gun jammed owing to a bullet piercing the water-jacket. Salt had a bullet through his helmet, and there were 51 bullet holes in the gun and carriage. He was recommended for the D.S.O. by Sir Redvers Buller, but did not actually receive it owing to his untimely death from enteric shortly after the relief of Ladysmith. No. 4085 Corporal W. Roberts was



awarded the D.C.M. The position on Horseshoe Hill was held under continuous fire until the 27th, when the Boers finally gave way, and on St. David's Day the Royal Welch, with leeks in their helmets, the gift of a patriotic Welshman of Natal, marched into Nelthorpe, and two days later entered Ladysmith with the remainder of the army. Major-General Hildyard, to whose brigade the Royal Fusiliers and Royal Welch Fusiliers were attached from the 24th to the 27th February, in a commendatory letter sent by him, speaks of the "exceptional coolness and gallantry exhibited by all ranks during a very trying period," and records that "their conduct throughout was most gratifying and was worthy of the high reputation of both regiments."

Lord Roberts, who, with Lord Kitchener as his Chief of Staff, had been sent hurriedly out to take supreme command, had already in his swift march on Bloemfontein succeeded in freeing Kimberley from danger, and, indeed, had contributed largely to the relief of Ladysmith by drawing away Boers to oppose him and to defend their capital. There now only remained Mafeking to be rescued, and for this operation the 10th Division, to which the Fusilier Brigade belonged, was transferred in April, 1900, via Durban and Cape-town to Kimberley. Sir Archibald Hunter, who had been entrusted with the task of rescuing Baden-Powell's little garrison, decided to send a small flying column under Colonel Mahon to carry out the actual relief, whilst he himself with his main body fended off any Boer forces trying to interfere. The flying column, which, with the exception of 100 picked men from the Fusilier Brigade, consisted entirely of mounted troops, moved off on May 4th, and marching 34 miles the first day, and 24 the following day, carried out its work without difficulty (25 rank and file of the Royal Welch Fusiliers under Second-Lieutenant H. V. V. Kyrke, forming part of the dismounted contingent).

**Relief of  
Mafeking,  
May 5th,  
1900.**

Meanwhile General Hunter moved to Rooiberg and attacked the commandos of Generals Liebenberg and Du Toit. The action was completely successful, and the enemy was driven off. The Royal Welch lost Captain Lovett and 7 rank and file killed, and Captain Mantell, who was commanding, Captain and Adjutant Braithwaite, and 14 rank and file wounded.

Very shortly after the relief of Mafeking the 10th Division was broken up, and the Royal Welch were employed for some months with several columns occupying the Transvaal and endeavouring to round up various Boer Generals and their commandos. These operations involved some tremendous marches and several brisk engagements, such as those near Venterskroon (August 7th, 1900), Dwarsvlei (October 9th, 1900),

Buffels Doorn Pass (October 15th, 1900), and Frederikstad (October 18th-25th, 1900).

The fighting at Frederikstad is of more than usual interest, since it involved the temporary surrounding of General Barton's column of Fusiliers, and after some critical days, the infliction of a sharp defeat on no other than the famous General De Wet.

Barton had reached Frederikstad on October 18th after a running fight lasting all day, and on arrival the force bivouacked in widely extended positions. On the 20th two small columns of Royal Welch, with Imperial Yeomanry, and 2 guns Royal Field Artillery each, were sent out, the one to bring in a convoy, and the other to reconnoitre. During their absence the Brigade Signalling Officer (Lieutenant Kington, Royal Welch Fusiliers), who was on the lookout for a neighbouring column, observed a large body of horsemen advancing from the south, and turning a helio on to them, soon discovered that they were Boers. In fact, instead of being the Colonial Division engaged at the time in the pursuit of De Wet, it was the famous De Wet himself, with several commandos numbering 2,500 mounted men and 6 guns.

General Barton had orders on no account to let these commandos escape north, and, knowing that if he carried out an infantry attack the enemy would simply ride round and avoid him, decided to keep De Wet in play, until other troops could arrive, by sitting still and allowing the latter to surround him.

Both the small columns returned to camp safely, although that sent out under Lieutenant-Colonel Sir R. Colleton, Royal Welch Fusiliers, to reconnoitre had considerable fighting on their way back, and the British held their ground until nightfall. During the night Barton reduced the area held and concentrated his troops somewhat, and for the next four days the Royal Scots Fusiliers, Royal Welch Fusiliers, and Imperial Yeomanry were pressed hard by the Boers, who, on the evening of October 24th, succeeded in driving the Yeomanry from a low hill commanding the water supply. This was, however, reoccupied after dark, and subsequently held by "E" Company Royal Welch Fusiliers. By the evening of the 24th the ammunition of the column was reduced to 80 rounds per rifle and 40 per gun, and of this shortage De Wet was well aware. He therefore ordered 700 men to move by night on foot to a donga near the railway station bridge, from which they could rush Gun Hill under cover of darkness. Many of the Boers, having no liking for the job, did not reach the rendezvous, and the remainder, being insufficient to attack, remained hidden in the donga, until discovered on the morning of the 25th by a water cart of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, which they promptly captured. This led at first to a small attack on the donga by a company of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and gradually to a general

attack by the British, in which the Royal Welch finally got in with the bayonet. The Boers fled disheartened by this reverse, and by the arrival of a British convoy with ammunition, and, giving up the attempt to break through to the north, retired towards the Vaal. Lord Roberts wired congratulations to General Barton and his troops on their success, and, that day being the day on which the annexation of the Transvaal was proclaimed, the official summary of news remarked that :—" Wales would have been represented by the Royal Welch Fusiliers, but that distinguished corps is engaged to-day adding fresh laurels to its splendid reputation."

A month later the Royal Welch flocked down to the railway station at Potchefstroom to bid good-bye to General Barton, who had just handed over the column. The General made them a farewell speech, in which he told them that during his twelve months' command of the Fusilier Brigade he had looked on them as his " special regiment," and that, belonging to one of the most distinguished regiments in the British Army, they might pride themselves that they " had not only maintained the reputation of their regiment, but had greatly increased it."

Under General Barton's successor the Royal Welch earned the nickname of " Babington's Foot Cavalry " by their fine marching, the following being examples of this good quality :—Potchefstroom—Buffelsdoorn—Witpoortje—Venters Dorp, 56 miles in three days between December 26th and 28th, 1900. Ventersdorp—Vlakfontein to the assistance of Cunningham's column, 37 miles in 24 hours over a bad road, on January 24th and 25th, 1901. Naauwpoort—Ventersdorp to relieve the Northumberland Fusiliers, who were hard pressed at Lichtenburg, 44 miles in 30 hours in heavy rain, the country being more or less under water, on March 7th-8th, 1901. Towards the end of May General Babington bade farewell and told the Battalion : " I have seen a good many regiments, but I know none to equal this regiment in its discipline and the way all duties are performed. I cannot fully express my gratitude to you."

After this there followed a year of weary work escorting convoys and establishing various blockhouse lines, until finally, on June 1st, 1902, it was learnt that Peace had been concluded, and that the long struggle was over. It should be recorded that no convoy guarded by the Royal Welch was ever lost, though severe attacks were often made on them, and during this difficult period, when reputations were toppling right and left, the Regiment maintained theirs to the full, and at times inflicted sharp rebuffs on the Boers. On the night of July 18th, 1901, Lieutenant Edwards, Sergeant Cottrell, and 9 men from a small detachment at Naauwpoort, having information of the presence of General Jan Smuts and 12 Boers in a farm, crept out and boldly surrounded and

rushed the place with the bayonet. Smuts escaped, but 4 Boers were killed and 4 captured, together with a cart and 25 horses. This feat elicited a telegram of congratulation from Lord Kitchener, who had succeeded Roberts as Commander-in-Chief, and won a D.S.O. for Lieutenant Edwards, a D.C.M. for Sergeant Cottrell, and promotion to Corporal for Privates Duglord and 2990 Davies.

No account, however short, of the part taken by the Royal Welch Fusiliers can be completed without mention of the good work done by the three contingents from the Volunteer Battalions, who came out and served with the 1st Battalion for a great part of the war, and of the Mounted Infantry Section found by the Battalion, which took part in the Battle of Colesberg, where on McCracken's Hill they fought for seven days and nights, for the first 36 hours of which they were without rations ; Poplars Grove, where they formed part of the advanced guard ; Driefontein ; Diamond Hill, and Wittenbergen ; and were continuously employed until the end of the war, one of their achievements being the capture of Commandant Erasmus.

The honours "Relief of Ladysmith" and "South Africa, 1899-1902," were granted to the Royal Welch for their services in the war, and, were any further proof required than the despatches and speeches of their Generals of the esteem in which they were held, it may be found in the fact that, on December 21st, 1901, His Majesty King Edward VII appointed the Prince of Wales (now His Majesty King George V) to be Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment, an honour which was, and is, deeply appreciated. On May 8th, 1903, the Colonel-in-Chief went to Wrexham and paid his first visit to the Royal Welch, when, in the course of his speech, he declared : "I am very proud to have been able to present you with the medals to-day which you have so well earned during your long and arduous campaign in South Africa. I don't propose to recapitulate the deeds which have added fresh fame to the glorious records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers. Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, General Barton, and General Babington have testified in no uncertain language to the splendid work achieved by the Battalion from the time it landed in Natal in November, 1899, until the close of the war, and we must not forget that upwards of 350 of your Militia Battalion, and three Volunteer Companies also took part in the war."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SECOND BATTALION IN CRETE AND CHINA—THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS BEFORE THE GREAT WAR.

DURING part of the time when the 1st Battalion was winning laurels in South Africa, the 2nd Battalion was also on active service, but in another continent, almost a unique occurrence before the Great War. This Battalion, on its return in 1880 from Gibraltar, was first of all stationed at Pembroke Dock, and then served continuously for 10 years in Ireland. A most successful march through North Wales in 1892 was followed by periods at Aldershot and Manchester, and in 1896 they arrived at Malta. More than nine months had not, however, been passed there before disturbances in Crete between Greek and Turk made it necessary to send to that island an international force, in which they were included. For over a year they were thus employed under active service conditions, and were then moved to Cairo. Trouble breaking out again in Crete, they were sent back hurriedly for a further three months while the island was pacified.

In 1900, when they were serving in Hong-Kong, a serious rising broke out in China, having as its object the expulsion of all foreigners. Outrage followed outrage, and on June 20th all the foreign community in Peking had to concentrate in the British Legation, where they were at once besieged by the so-called "Boxers."

Three companies of the Royal Welch had already, on the 16th, left Hong-Kong in H.M.S. *Terrible*, and, disembarking at Taku on the 21st, they reached that day a point some seven miles from Tientsin, the foreign residents of which city were also beleaguered by the Boxers. On June 22nd they came up with American and Russian forces, who were also marching to the rescue, and found that the latter had been checked by the enemy. The advance was, however, soon continued, and some villages having been cleared of the Chinese, the main position was carried with the bayonet and the European quarter of the city occupied. On the 24th the Royal Welch took part in the relief of Admiral Seymour's force which had got into difficulties at Hsiku in their attempt to reach Peking. Desultory fighting then went on in and around Tientsin until July 13th, when the operations for the capture of the native city began. The first day's attack did not succeed,

and the Allied force lost over 800 men, although, fortunately, the casualties of the Royal Welch were only 5 killed and 19 wounded, but the next day the city was taken.

On July 21st Battalion Headquarters and a fourth company arrived at Tientsin, and were thus in time to take part in the Allied advance on Pekin. The march began on August 4th, and after

**Relief of Pekin,** bivouacking at Hsiku for the night the relief force at  
**August 14th,** dawn on the 5th attacked the Chinese in position astride  
**1900.** the River Peiho near Peitsang. On the 6th, at Yangtsun

the enemy again held up the march, but were once more driven out of their positions, the main attack being delivered by the British and Americans. During the attack "as some shells from one of our batteries were taking our troops and the Americans in reverse, Private Jackson, Royal Welch Fusiliers, volunteered, got up on the embankment, and communicated with the battery. While doing so he was exposed to fire from both sides." For this conduct Private Jackson was later awarded the D.C.M., being the fourth of the Royal Welch in China to be thus distinguished, three others—Sergeant Taylor and Privates Crew and Doodson—having already earned this decoration for their conduct at Tientsin.

The advance was resumed on August 8th, and on the 14th the Allies, headed by the 1st Sikhs and the Royal Welch Fusiliers, entered Pekin, and relieved the Legation.

On October 18th the Royal Welch, who had been the only British infantry with the forces, left Pekin and returned to Hong-Kong, whereupon the General Officer Commanding expressed his "appreciation of their soldierly conduct during this campaign. Nothing could have exceeded their dogged endurance during the march on Pekin, and in Pekin their discipline, conduct, and appearance have, with few exceptions been most satisfactory."

The war in South Africa having disclosed a great number of shortcomings in the organization and training of the Army—Regular, Militia, and Volunteer—energetic steps were taken, as soon as peace was signed, to set the house in order. Before long a proper General Staff had been created; the Regular Army at home had been formed into an expeditionary force of six divisions; the Militia, which previously could not be ordered abroad, was turned into a Special Reserve to feed the Regulars with drafts in time of war; and the Volunteers were properly organized in brigades and divisions for home defence, and renamed the Territorial Force. While this reorganization was in progress training was livened up to an extent never before dreamt of, and very soon all battalions of the Royal Welch Fusiliers felt the effects and benefits. At home, the 1st Battalion experienced a series of training seasons at

Aldershot, Dublin, and Portland, the strenuous nature of which may best be judged from the following examples.

In 1908, one week's Preliminary Brigade Training included five "night shows," and during that training season the Battalion marched over 500 miles, exclusive of manœuvres, etc., and were  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months under canvas. In 1910, the Battalion marched out of Cork on July 21st, while October 3rd found it at the Curragh entraining for Dublin after a training season, during six whole weeks of which rain fell every single day. In 1911, returning to Dublin from Battalion Training, the march of 23 miles was carried out with ease between ten o'clock at night and ten in the morning. Crossing the River Liffey in craft improvised from tarpaulins, straw, brushwood, limbered wagons, and even packs, was practised that year, as well as entraining and detraining. The results were immediately manifest. On August 18th at 9 p.m., totally unexpectedly, a message was received to get the men out of town and stand by, object not stated. At 12.30 a.m., the Battalion was ordered to be ready to embark at 6 a.m. for England for the railway strike. At 2.45 a.m., came the question how soon after 4 a.m. could the Battalion be at North Wall, three-quarters of an hour's march from barracks? Half past four was the reply, and at 4.27 a.m. the Royal Welch were alongside the ship.

The four Territorial Battalions, forming a complete Royal Welch Brigade, made rapid strides towards the standard of the Regulars, and a visit to them in camp was an eye-opener. The 4th Denbighshire Battalion, indeed, was remarkable in the whole Territorial Force for the great strength in which it attended camp.

In India, where the 2nd Battalion was serving, Lord Kitchener, as Commander-in-Chief, also carried out a thorough reorganization for war, and electrified the training of the Army there by instituting the famous Kitchener's Tests. The test undergone in 1905 at Agra, which formed only part of the annual inspection of the 2nd Battalion, consisted in marching 15 miles with 100 rounds of ball ammunition, carrying out an attack with ball ammunition, bivouacking for the night with outposts, and fighting a rearguard action back to barracks next day. In that year the 2nd Battalion was found to be the best battalion in India for training. At the conclusion of the test, held at Schwebo in 1908, which was carried out in the presence of General Sir Archibald Hunter (under whom the 1st Battalion fought at Rooidam) the Brigade Commander reported on the 2nd Battalion as being "A corps in good training, both physical and professional for war, with a good tone, and great *esprit de corps*. Above the average in efficiency."

In 1905 His Royal Highness the Colonel-in-Chief, visited the 2nd Battalion for the first time, at Agra, and in the following year the 1st Battalion was similarly honoured. A contingent of 100 men and the

Goat from the 1st Battalion, as also a smaller contingent from the 3rd Battalion, were sent to London in 1911 for the Coronation of His Majesty King George ; a Guard of Honour was mounted in the same year for the opening by His Majesty of the Royal College of Science, Dublin ; and the whole Battalion proceeded to Wales for the investiture of the Prince of Wales, mounting a Guard of Honour at Carnarvon Castle, and also, on the following day, at Bangor, at the opening of the University College of North Wales. At Carnarvon not only the 1st Battalion, but also the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Battalions were on duty. In addition, at the Delhi Durbar, 1911, a contingent from the 2nd Battalion, then stationed at Quetta, was present, and took part in all the ceremonies.

But the Royal Welchman's time was not wholly occupied with marches, reviews, and the like, since sport and competitions of all sorts were in full swing during the period just before the Great War. The following incomplete list will give some idea of the success achieved by the Regiment in this respect :—

#### 1ST BATTALION.

##### 1907-10, at *Cork*—

Cork Senior League Football Cup.

Munster League Football Cup.

##### 1910-12, at *Dublin*—

13th Infantry Brigade Inter-Regimental Shooting Competition.  
Monro Challenge Cup (Gymnastics, Cross-Country, and Shooting).

13th Infantry Brigade Inter-Company Bayonet Fighting, 2nd.

Irish Army Football Cup.

Irish Army Boxing Cup.

Dublin Garrison Football Challenge Cup.

Irish Junior League Football Cup.

##### 1913, at *Portland*—

Dorset Senior Football Cup.

Weymouth Senior Football Challenge Cup.

At Southern Command Boxing Meeting : Winner of Middle-weights—Corporal Spalding. Two other representatives reached the finals.

At Army Boxing Championship Meeting : Winner of the Feather-weights—Private Willis ; and the 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers took 2nd place.

At Army Athletic Meeting : Winner of Officers' High Jumping—Lieutenant Courage. 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers' Relay Team took 3rd prize.



1914, at *Malta*—

The Governor's Football Cup.

At Royal Naval Athletic Meeting: Winner of Half Mile Championship open to all ranks of the Navy and Army—Captain and Adjutant Skaife.

At Navy and Army (Malta) Boxing Meeting: Winner of the Welter-weights—Sergeant Spalding. Two other representatives reached the finals.

Besides the above, between 1904 and 1913, the officers of the 1st Battalion held ten Point-to-Point race meetings.

#### 2ND BATTALION.

1907, at *Agra*—

Bengal and Punjab Football Cup.

Runners-up Durand All-India Football Cup.

1909, in *Burma*—

Boxing Championship of All India.

1911, at *Quetta*—

Boxing Championship of All India.

1912, at *Quetta*—

Boxing Championship of All India.

Quetta Boxing Challenge Shield.

1913, at *Quetta*—

Quetta Boxing Challenge Shield.

Runners-up, All-India Boxing Championship.

Besides the above, between 1906 and 1913, the officers won 12 Polo Tournaments, including (1913) the Infantry Cup and the Open Tournament at Lucknow, in which they beat the Tigers, one of the best teams in India.

The above brief sketch of the life of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in the last few years prior to 1914 is given, because it is on the efficiency of the Regiment in training and sport in peace that it must depend for its success in war. Until the Regimental Records, 1914-18, have been completed, it is impossible in the scope of a book such as this to do justice to their prowess in the Great War. An attempt has, however, been made to give *some* idea of the share taken by the Royal Welch, and this will be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GREAT WAR, 1914-18—ITS CAUSES—THE COURSE OF THE WAR— THE ROYAL WELCH IN THE GREAT WAR.

THE Great War was not brought about in a moment. To find its roots it is necessary to go back sixty years and more to the days when Prussia, one of the many independent states of which Germany was then composed, began to remodel her army, so as to wrest the leadership of the German race from Austria. A brutal attack on little Denmark in 1864 was engineered in order to test the military machine, and then, in 1866, Austria was crushed in a single battle. Easy terms were given the latter so as not to make her defeat too bitter. In 1870 a quarrel was picked with France, the Prussian hordes were soon besieging Paris, and in 1871 at Versailles William I, King of Prussia, was acclaimed by all German States, except Austria, as Emperor of Germany.

Unfortunately, the easy victory over France only gave the German nation a lust for further conquest and power, and soon they were aiming at world supremacy. Austria and Italy were drawn into alliance, a large navy was constructed and the already huge army still further strengthened. Alarmed for their safety, France and Russia made an alliance, and very reluctantly Great Britain, without becoming an ally of theirs, came to an understanding to help in case Germany broke the peace.

By 1914 it was only a question as to what moment Kaiser William II and his advisers would choose for their bid for world supremacy.

In June of that year the heir to the Austrian throne was murdered at Sarajevo, and Austria, alleging that the culprit was a Serb, and egged on by Germany, declared war against Serbia. The Serbs being Slavs, and, therefore, kinsfolk to the Russians, Russia warned the Austrians to keep their hands off Serbia, and mobilized part of her army. Germany immediately ordered Russia to demobilize, and demanded from France that she should hand over her frontier fortresses, as a pledge not to help Russia. This precipitated war between Russia, France, and Serbia on the one side, and Germany and Austria on the other side. Britain still kept out, but the first move of the Germans was to strike at France through Belgium, a neutral country, whose neutrality the Powers were pledged to protect. All appeals to the Germans to respect Belgium being in vain, war against Germany was declared on August 4th, 1914, and the British Navy and Army were immediately mobilized.

## 1914.

We must now attempt to sketch the course of the war. The first fighting was on the Eastern Front, and there the Russians, by attacking Austria-Hungary, checked the invasion of Serbia, and, by sending three armies into East Prussia, lightened the pressure on the Western Front. Germany's plan had been to overwhelm France by an unexpected blow through Belgium, and then to deal with Russia at her leisure. At first, all went well with this plan, and the French Army, with the British prolonging its line to the north, were driven back, fighting stubbornly, to within a few miles of Paris. Here, exhaustion and the pressure of the Russian invasion of East Prussia brought the enemy to a standstill. General Joffre and Sir John French, the French and British Commanders, immediately counter-attacked on the line of the River Marne (September 6th, 1914), and won a brilliant victory, which drove the Germans back to the River Aisne, where, after much further fighting, neither side was able to obtain a decision. Both armies then began to extend northwards towards the sea, the Allies in order to turn the German right flank, the enemy in order to seize the Channel ports. This brought about the first battle of Ypres, which lasted for nearly a month, and ended with the complete repulse of the Germans.

Thus the fighting of 1914 in both East and West may be said to have ended with the holding up of the first rush of the German hordes. Whilst the above events were taking place on the various fronts, a great change came over Britain. Lord Kitchener had been appointed Secretary of State for War as soon as hostilities began, and his first step had been to call for 500,000 recruits for the Army. The result was a rush to the Colours of the flower of the nation, which in twenty-one months produced over 5,000,000 men for the Services, who, in company with the masses of fighting men sent by the Dominions and Colonies, brought the forces of the Empire to a strength never before dreamt of.

Unfortunately, the year 1914 was also remarkable for the entry into the war, on Germany's side, of Turkey, an event which was a serious blow, especially for Britain and Russia, and prolonged the war considerably.

## 1915.

Turkey was not only in a position to attack Russia through the Caucasus, and Egypt by way of the Suez Canal, but, by blocking the Dardanelles, could put a stranglehold on the passage of supplies to and from Russia, and by propaganda could stir up the Mohammedans in the British Empire. Russia appealed for help, and from February to December, 1915, desperate efforts were made to force the Dardanelles both by naval attack and by landings on the shores of Gallipoli. The

result was a costly failure, only redeemed from disaster by a successful withdrawal. A Turkish attack on the Suez Canal in January and February, 1915, was, however, equally unsuccessful, and in Mesopotamia the British and Indian forces, which had been landed in 1914 at Basra to protect the oilfields, made considerable progress towards Baghdad. A check, however, suffered by General Townshend at Ctesiphon in December, 1915, was followed by his being surrounded at Kut-el-Amara, where in April, 1916, on the failure of relief operations, he was forced to surrender.

On the Eastern Front in 1915 the Russians were driven back with terrible losses out of East Prussia, Poland, and Galicia, but eventually managed to dig themselves in and hold the Germans and Austrians up.

On the Western Front the Allies made several unsuccessful attempts to break through the German line, in the course of which the British fought the Battles of Neuve Chapelle, Festubert, and Loos, and, on the whole, the year 1915 was marked by a stalemate, neither side being able to gain very much.

### **1916.**

Italy had, however, joined in against the Central Powers, and the troops raised as a result of Kitchener's appeal had come on so fast that it was decided by the Allies to make a big effort to smash the enemy in 1916 by offensives on all fronts. Russia led off in June, 1916, and in the course of about six weeks took some 600,000 prisoners. In July, not only did Italy begin an offensive, which gave her the important town of Gorizia, but the British, under Sir Douglas Haig, and the French commenced a vigorous attack on both sides of the River Somme, which went on almost continuously until heavy autumn rains made further fighting impossible.

Complete success was not gained, but the damage done to the German Army was such that it never quite regained its former strength and efficiency.

Even in such a brief outline of events such as this, mention must be made of the death by drowning, on June 5th, of Lord Kitchener on his way to help in reorganizing the Russian forces, and of the great naval Battle of Jutland, when the German Fleet made its first and last attempt to break the British blockade. The year 1916 was one of success for the Allies, and came near to finishing the war.

### **1917.**

In 1917, however, a series of disappointments were experienced, and the only big success was in Mesopotamia, where General Maude revenged the defeats of 1916 by carrying out a victorious advance and taking Kut

and Baghdad. In Russia a revolution broke out, the Tsar was dethroned, an attempted offensive broke down, the Russian Army melted, and the country went out of the war. In the west the French were badly defeated in the spring, and the British Army had to fight on, first of all in the Arras neighbourhood, and later near Ypres and Passchendaele to keep the Germans from crushing France. In addition, the Italians were so severely handled that it was necessary to send French and British troops hurriedly to Italy to strengthen their front.

### 1918.

In the beginning of 1918 the position was critical. The German submarine campaign was seriously affecting Britain's food supplies, and the disappearance of Russia from the war had given the enemy the superiority on the Western Front. The only strong card was the arrival of American troops in France, the United States having, in 1917, decided to declare war on Germany. In March, April, May, and June, 1918, the enemy delivered a series of smashing blows against the Allies' front near Amiens, in Flanders, on the Chemin des Dames and in the Champagne, which came within an ace of success. This had, however, the result of forcing Britain and France to appoint one supreme commander in the West, and Marshal Foch was chosen. As soon as the German attacks had come to a standstill he began to strike back, and on August 8th, the decisive offensive by the British Fourth Army began. The enemy were driven relentlessly back and back, from position to position, until they could hold together no longer, and on November 11th an armistice came into force. In Palestine an offensive, begun by Lord Allenby in the winter of 1917, had resulted in the capture of Gaza, Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo, and had put the Turks out of the war. Bulgaria crumbled before the attacks of the Salonika forces, and the crossing of the Piave, and the Battle of Vittorio Veneto decided the Austrians to throw in their hand. Germany was thus forced to make peace.

### THE ROYAL WELCH IN THE GREAT WAR.

Such, very briefly, was the struggle, into which the Royal Welch were plunged on that fateful August 4th, 1914. The outbreak of war found them a compact regiment consisting of two Regular battalions—the 1st stationed at Malta, and the 2nd at Portland; one Special Reserve battalion—the 3rd, with headquarters at Wrexham; and four Territorial battalions—the 4th Denbighshire, 5th Flintshire, 6th Carnarvonshire and Anglesey, and the 7th Merioneth and Montgomery, with headquarters at Wrexham, Flint, Carnarvon, and Newtown respectively, which were at the time in annual camp at Aberystwyth.

Within a few days of hostilities opening, the 2nd Battalion had left for France and there joined the 19th Brigade, the 3rd Battalion was occupying the defences of Pembroke Dock, and the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th were on a war footing. Then Kitchener's call to arms was heard, the Royal Welch began rapidly to expand, and so instant was the response of Wales to the summons that, whereas the Army List of September, 1914, showed but seven battalions of Welch Fusiliers, that of September, 1915, showed 21—the Regiment was trebled in a year. The final number reached was 42 battalions, including two regiments of Welsh Yeomanry transformed into infantry.

The 2nd Battalion were the first to engage the enemy, and had fought at Mons, Le Cateau, the Marne, and the Aisne before the 1st Battalion, released from Malta, could join in. The latter landed at Zeebrugge in October, 1914, with the 7th Division, and, after a series of marches from Bruges to Ostend, Ghent to Thielt, and Thielt to Roulers, finally on October 15th entered Ypres, the scene of their first victorious fight with the Germans. There, near Langemarck and Gheluvelt, whilst the 2nd Battalion, transferred north from the Aisne with the first six divisions, were beating off the German attacks near La Bassée, the 1st Battalion was more than decimated in the struggle to keep the enemy from seizing the Channel ports. On October 19th they went into action 1,150 strong—on the 31st of the same month, although they had in the meanwhile received their first reinforcement, there were but 90 men left. The part taken by the 7th Division in this first Battle of Ypres is likely to prove immortal, and to measure the share in the glory of it due to the Royal Welch, we need only read the despatches of their Divisional and Brigade Commanders. General Capper, a man of few words, stated in an Order of the Day :—

“ On October 19th the Battalion attacked Kleythoek with much gallantry and dash, and later on the same day acted with coolness and discipline under trying conditions. On October 20th and 21st at Zonnebeke, the Battalion held the left of the line under very heavy enfilade artillery fire and enveloping flank attack of enemy's infantry until withdrawn by orders of the Brigadier. During these two days' fighting this Battalion lost three-quarters of its strength in officers and men.

“ On October 30th the Battalion occupied the right of the 7th Division line. Owing to troops on their right being driven back, the Battalion became very exposed and was subject to an enveloping attack by the enemy. The Battalion, however, held on and lost nearly all its effectives, including the Colonel and all other officers, only 90 men rejoining the Brigade. This Battalion has fought nobly, and has carried out

its high traditions in fighting on until completely overwhelmed. As a battalion, it had, for the time being, ceased to exist."

General Lawford, the Brigadier, used the following words :—

" I wish to add my sincere appreciation of the splendid behaviour of the 1st Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers on all occasions. The Battalion has nobly maintained the glorious traditions of the Regiment, and has again added to the honour gained in former campaigns. All ranks have always responded to calls made on them under severe conditions. I am very proud to have had the honour of having the Battalion in the Brigade under my command."

Such was the lead given at the outset by the old formations to the younger battalions, as they trained in Wales and England. Nor was it long before these began to take the field.

### 1915.

A few weeks after the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (March 10th, 1915) in which the 1st Battalion, restored by drafts to its proper strength, again distinguished itself, the 4th Battalion, which was one of the first Territorial battalions to be sent to France, was fighting the Battle of Aubers (November 5th, 1914). This Battalion, being largely composed of miners, skilled hands with pick and shovel, was made into a Pioneer Battalion towards the end of 1915.

In May, 1915, at Festubert, the 1st Battalion for the second time lost its Commanding Officer killed in action and the greater part of its effectives, but in a battle where few units succeeded in reaching the enemy position, the Royal Welch seized all their objectives, maintained themselves there for some 12 hours, and only withdrew on receipt of orders to do so. For their conduct this day they won one Victoria Cross (Sergeant Barter), one D.S.O., one Military Cross, and 12 Distinguished Conduct Medals.

September, 1915, was marked by the appearance in action in France of a Service Battalion, the 9th, which, together with the 1st, 2nd, and 4th, took part in the Battle of Loos.

Meanwhile three Territorial battalions—the 5th, 6th, and 7th—of the 53rd Division, and the 8th, a Service battalion, were with the heroic Gallipoli force, the 8th placing the fighting at Cape Helles, Krithia, Sari Bair, and Suvla to its credit, and the 5th, 6th, and 7th the last-named action, and also the Landing at Suvla (August 6th, 1915).

Shortly after the evacuation of Gallipoli the 53rd Division found itself employed in the defence of the Suez Canal. In this the 25th Battalion (Montgomeryshire Yeomanry) shared and later fought at Rumani.

The 13th Division, in which the 8th Battalion was serving, was shipped to Mesopotamia to take part in the desperate battles on the Tigris fought in the endeavour to relieve Kut.

#### 1916.

The first Battle of the Somme, commencing on July 1st, 1916, saw the appearance of the 38th Welsh Division, which included the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Battalions of the Royal Welch Fusiliers. These Battalions, together with the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 9th, and 10th, between July 1st and November 18th, 1916, added the Battles of Albert (9th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), Bazentin (1st, 2nd, 9th and 10th Battalions), Delville Wood (10th Battalion), Pozières (2nd and 9th Battalions), Guillemont (1st Battalion), Flers-Courcelette (4th Battalion), Morval (4th Battalion), Le Transloy (4th Battalion), Ancre Heights (9th Battalion), and Ancre (9th and 10th Battalions) to the honours, to which the Regiment is entitled.

#### 1917.

The Battle of Arras, in which the 2nd and 10th Battalions took part, began on April 9th, 1917, and these Battalions also added the name Scarpe to the glorious roll, whilst the 1st Battalion fought and lost heavily at Bullecourt, and the 10th Battalion at Arleux.

Messines (4th and 9th Battalions), Ypres (2nd, 4th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Battalions), Pilckem (13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), Menin Road (9th Battalion), Polygon Wood (1st, 2nd, 9th and 10th Battalions), Broodseinde (9th Battalion), Poelcappelle (9th Battalion) Passchendaele (1st and 9th Battalions), and Cambrai (19th and 24th Battalions) followed, and in the same year the 11th Battalion in Macedonia won the honour "Doiran, 1917."

In Palestine in 1917-18 the Territorial Battalions of the 53rd Division and the 24th (Denbighshire Yeomanry) and 25th (Montgomeryshire Yeomanry) Battalions took part in Allenby's victorious advance, and fought at Gaza (5th, 6th, 7th, 24th, and 25th Battalions), El Mughar (6th Battalion), Jerusalem (5th, 24th, and 25th Battalions), Jericho (6th, 24th, and 25th Battalions), Tell Asur (5th, 6th, and 24th Battalions), Megiddo (5th and 6th Battalions), and Nablus (5th and 6th Battalions).

In this little book it is not possible to describe the fighting involved in General Allenby's victorious campaign against the Turks and Germans, but it is equally impossible to omit reference to the great success of the 53rd Welsh Territorial Division at the decisive Battle of Gaza-Beersheba. After the first stage of the fighting the Commander-in-Chief telegraphed to General Mott, who commanded the 53rd :—"I congratulate you and



your troops on admirable success of your efforts and troops gallant conduct. . . . Your operations have given us most favourable prospects of success which now depends on the valour of the 53rd Division."

The Corps Commander, General Chetwode, wired:—"I cannot sufficiently express my admiration for the dash and gallantry with which 10th, 60th, 74th Divisions carried out their attack to-day. I would wish them to know how much they owe to the staunchness of the 53rd Division, who have for three days and three nights withstood repeated attacks by superior forces, and to the cavalry, who have held the gap. I heartily congratulate all ranks."

The following letter from Sir Philip Chetwode appeared in *The Times*, and several Welsh papers:—"Tell people in Wales that 53rd Division fought magnificently and stood up to superior numbers for three days and nights, and guarded my right flank, while we broke the Turkish centre. I am intensely proud of my troops, who fairly carried the Turk off his legs with their impetuosity. Certain Turkish Divisions have, as always, fought like Tigers. They lost heavily in killed; some of my Welsh troops buried over 500 in front of them after a counter-attack."

In addition, in 1917, in Mesopotamia, the 8th Battalion was with General Maude at Kut al Amara and Baghdad.

### 1918.

Before the last year of the Great War opened, the 1st Battalion was hurried off with the 7th and other divisions to the help of our hard-pressed Allies in Italy. There they remained until the end of the war, and with the Honourable Artillery Company had the distinction of being the first troops to cross the River Piave, and thus opened the battle named Vittorio Veneto, which began the final offensive against the Austrians.

In Macedonia, the 11th Battalion were in the final attack against, and pursuit of, the Bulgarian Army, taking part in the Battle of Doiran (1918).

In France, in the spring of 1918, came the smashing blows of the German's last effort to break through, and then, after some successful counter-strokes delivered by Marshal Foch with French troops, the opening on August 8th, near Amiens, by the British Fourth Army under Lord Rawlinson, of the final advance to victory.

The honours, Somme, 1918 (2nd, 4th, 9th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 25th, and 26th Battalions), and Bapaume, 1918 (2nd, 4th, 9th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, and 25th Battalions) tell not only of this final advance across the battlefields of 1916, but also of the struggles there in March and April to check the onrush of the German hordes. St. Quentin

(4th and 9th Battalions), Ancre, 1918 (4th Battalion), Lys (9th and 24th Battalions), Messines, 1918 (9th Battalion), Bailleul (9th and 24th Battalions), Kemmel (9th Battalion), Scherpenberg (9th and 24th Battalions), and Aisne, 1918, record the German offensive, and Albert, 1918 (2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, and 17th and 26th Battalions), Drocourt-Queant (4th Battalion), Hindenburg Line (2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th and 25th Battalions), Havrincourt (2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), Epéhy (2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, and 25th Battalions), St. Quentin Canal (2nd and 17th Battalions), Beaurevoir (13th, 14th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), Cambrai, 1918 (2nd, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, and 24th Battalions), Ypres, 1918 (24th and 26th Battalions), Selle (2nd, 9th, 13th, 14th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), and Sambre (2nd, 9th, 13th, 14th, 16th, and 17th Battalions), trace the path of the British Army back to Mons, their starting point in 1914.

At present, and particularly within the limits of a little book such as this, it is not possible to attempt an account of the battles merely enumerated above, but perhaps later, when the Records have been completed to 1918, a more worthy pen may do justice to the magnitude of the effort made in the four years of the war by the Regiment that fought under Marlborough, that fought at Dettingen, and Fontenoy and Minden, at Albuhera and Waterloo, on the Alma, and the Tugela, and always with devotion, but never with more devotion than in 1914-18, in the greatest war the world has ever seen.

### **VICTORIA CROSSES GAINED IN THE GREAT WAR.**

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES HOTHAM MONTAGU DOUGHTY-WYLIE, C.B., C.M.G., Headquarters Staff, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

On April 26th, 1915, subsequent to a landing having been effected on the beach at a point on the Gallipoli Peninsula, during which both Brigadier-General and Brigade Major had been killed, Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie and Captain Walford, Brigade Major, Royal Artillery, organized and led an attack through and on both sides of the village of Sedd-el-Bahr on the Old Castle at the top of the hill inland. The enemy's position was very strongly held and entrenched, and defended with concealed machine guns and pom-poms.

It was mainly due to the initiative, skill and great gallantry of these two officers that the attack was a complete success.

Both were killed in the moment of victory.

No. 3902 COMPANY SERGEANT-MAJOR FREDERICK BARTER, Special Reserve, attached 1st Battalion The Royal Welch Fusiliers.

For most conspicuous bravery and marked ability at Festubert on May 16th, 1915.

When in the first line of German trenches, Company Sergeant-Major Barter called for volunteers to enable him to extend our line, and with the eight men who responded he attacked the German position with bombs, capturing 3 German officers and 102 men, and 500 yards of their trenches. He subsequently found and cut eleven of the enemy's mine leads, situated about 20 yards apart.

NO. 34314 CORPORAL JOSEPH DAVIES, 10th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers, on July 20th, 1916, at Delville Wood.

For most conspicuous bravery. Prior to an attack on the enemy in a wood he became separated with eight men from the rest of his company. When the enemy delivered their second counter-attack his party was completely surrounded, but he got them into a shell hole, and, by throwing bombs and opening rapid fire, succeeded in routing them. Not content with this he followed them up in their retreat, and bayoneted several of them. Corporal Davies set a magnificent example of pluck and determination. He has done other very gallant work, and was badly wounded in the Second Battle of Ypres.

NO. 15280 PRIVATE ALBERT HILL, 10th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers, on July 20th, 1916, at Delville Wood.

For most conspicuous bravery. When his battalion had deployed under very heavy fire for an attack on the enemy in a wood, he dashed forward when the order to charge was given, and meeting two of the enemy suddenly, bayoneted them both. He was later sent by his platoon sergeant to get into touch with the company, and, finding himself cut off and almost surrounded by some twenty of the enemy, attacked them with bombs, killing and wounding many, and scattering the remainder.

He then joined a sergeant of his company, and helped him to fight the way back to the lines.

When he got back, hearing that his company officer and a scout were lying out wounded, he went out and assisted to bring in the wounded officer, two other men bringing in the scout.

Finally, he himself captured and brought in as prisoners two of the enemy. His conduct throughout was magnificent.

NO. 31161 CORPORAL JAMES LLEWELLYN DAVIES, 13th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers (Nantymoel, Glamorgan), on July 31st, 1917, at Pilkem.

For most conspicuous bravery.

During an attack on the enemy's line, this non-commissioned officer pushed through our own barrage and, single-handed, attacked a

machine-gun emplacement after several men had been killed in attempting to take it.

He bayoneted one of the machine gun crew, and brought in another man, together with the captured gun.

Corporal Davies, although wounded, then led a bombing party to the assault of a defended house, and killed a sniper who was harassing his platoon. This gallant non-commissioned officer has since died of wounds received during the attack.

No. 355652 ACTING-CORPORAL JOHN COLLINS, 25th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers (Merthyr Tydvil), on October 31st, 1917, in Palestine.

For most conspicuous bravery, resource, and leadership, when, after deployment, prior to an attack, his battalion was forced to lie out in the open under heavy shell and machine-gun fire, which caused many casualties.

This gallant non-commissioned officer repeatedly went out under heavy fire and brought wounded back to cover, thus saving many lives. In subsequent operations throughout the day Corporal Collins was conspicuous in rallying and leading his command. He led the final assault with the utmost skill, in spite of heavy fire at close range and uncut wire. He bayoneted fifteen of the enemy, and with a Lewis gun section pressed on beyond the objective and covered the reorganization and consolidation most effectively, although isolated and under fire from snipers and guns.

He showed throughout a magnificent example of initiative and fearlessness.

No. 5046 LANCE-CORPORAL HENRY WEALE, 14th Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers (Shotton, Ches.), on August 26th, 1918, at Bazentin Le Grand.

For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack. The adjacent battalion having been held up by enemy machine guns, Lance-Corporal Weale was ordered to deal with the hostile posts. When his Lewis gun failed him, on his own initiative he rushed the nearest post and killed the crew, then went for the others, the crews of which fled on his approach, this gallant non-commissioned officer pursuing them.

His very dashing deed cleared the way for the advance, inspired his comrades, and resulted in the capture of all the machine guns.

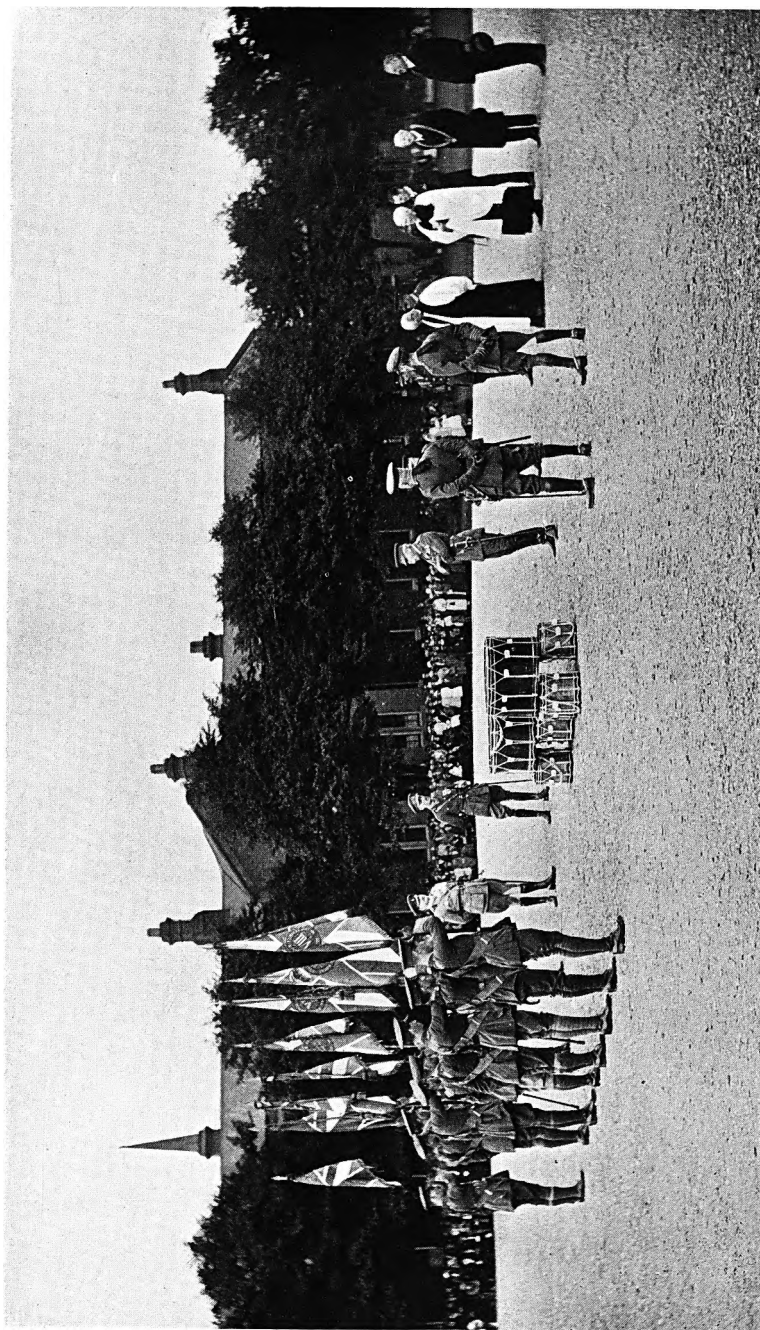
No. 355014 CORPORAL (LANCE-SERGEANT) WILLIAM WARING, M.M., 25th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers (T.F.), (Welshpool).

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Ronssoy, on September 18th, 1918. He led an attack against enemy machine

guns which were holding up the advance of neighbouring troops, and, in the face of devastating fire from flank and front, single-handed rushed a strong point, bayoneting four of the garrison and capturing 20 with their guns.

Lance-Sergeant Waring then, under heavy shell and machine-gun fire, reorganized his men, and led and inspired them for another 400 yards, when he fell mortally wounded.

His valour, determination, and leadership were conspicuous throughout.



*[Photo, J. Dougal, Wrexham]*  
**Presentation of Union Flags to Service Battalions of the Royal Welch Fusiliers by Lieut.-General Sir Francis Lloyd, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O., Colonel The Royal Welch Fusiliers.**



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ROYAL WELCH AFTER THE GREAT WAR—THE RE-RAISING OF THE TERRITORIAL BATTALIONS—THE 2ND BATTALION IN IRELAND, 1919-22—THE 1ST BATTALION IN WAZIRISTAN, 1921-23.

It would have been easy to have closed this short history at the end of the above brief sketch of the Great War, but the Royal Welch Fusiliers continue to serve, and the work put in to-day will provide the keynote to the history of to-morrow. Regiments cannot flourish on their past records, however brilliant, but must rely on their present deeds. In fact, the more brilliant the past, the more vigorous must be the life of the present, if a good name is to be kept bright. So some account of the work of the men now serving seems necessary.

As soon as the war was over the Service Battalions of the Royal Welch began to demobilize, and now the only visible traces of them are their Colours, many of which have an honoured place in Wrexham Church.

The Territorial Battalions were at once re-raised and soon began to excel in the Territorial Army. The 4th Battalion, which was re-raised in February, 1920, and within three months had attained a strength of 20 officers and 523 other ranks, was thus the second strongest in Britain, and also distinguished itself in 1923 by winning the Territorial Army Association Football Cup, defeating the 4th Royal Sussex in the final by 3 goals to 1.

The 5th Battalion has always been up to strength since it was re-raised in 1920. During 1923 the St. Asaph Platoon was third in the 53rd Division for the Prince of Wales's Shield for Drill, beating all other platoons of the Royal Welch Brigade and winning General Marden's Cup.

The rifle shooting of the 6th Battalion won for it the B.S.A. Guns, Limited, Competition, open to the whole Territorial Army, in both 1922 and 1923. In the latter year they also secured 3rd place in the same competition, and won the High Sheriff's Shield open to the Territorial Army, besides the 53rd Division Inter-Company Recruits Competition.

The 7th Battalion, which during the war had won outright the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and the 53rd Divisional Football Cups, have had a wonderful series of successes since their re-raising, which include :—In 1920 and 1921, 1st in both Brigade and Division Association Football ; in 1922, 1st in the Lord-Lieutenants' Shield for Rifle Shooting open to the whole Territorial Army and the R.N.V.R. ; 2nd in the 53rd



Division Cross-Country Cup ; and 3rd in the 53rd Division Athletic Shield ; and in 1923, 1st in Brigade and Division Association Football (General Montgomery's Cup) ; 1st in the 53rd Division Signalling Competition (Glamorganshire Territorial Association Trophy) ; 1st in the Lord St. Davids Shooting Trophy, open to teams from the 53rd Division ; 1st in the Miniature Range, Shropshire Territorial Association Trophy Competition, open to the 53rd Division ; and 1st in the Divisional Tug-of-War, besides several second and third places.

Meanwhile, in November, 1919, the 2nd Battalion arrived in Limerick from France, and, taking over from the 3rd Battalion, which was then disembodied, was plunged into the distasteful work of keeping the peace in a disordered Ireland. Escorting convoys, patrolling the country on foot, on bicycles, and in cars, guarding buildings, and searching for arms and assassins, occupied much of their time, and interfered with training and sport. None the less, they won third place in the Irish Army Boxing Championship of 1921, at a time when the Irish Army comprised most of the units serving at home. In the same year they won the Cameron Challenge Trophy for Athletics from eight battalions and the Royal Irish Constabulary of two counties, and in 1922 they not only retained this trophy, but were runners-up for the Army Association Football Cup.

In December, 1922, when they were stationed in Phoenix Park, Dublin, Southern Ireland was evacuated by British troops and after a march of over an hour along the Dublin Quays thronged by silent, gloomy crowds, they embarked for the friendly shores of Wales, where at Pembroke Dock they received a most generous welcome home from the wars.

The 1st Battalion reformed at Oswestry in 1919, and sailed for India in the autumn of the same year. Two years were spent at Lucknow, in the course of which they were winners of the Murray Association Football Cup (1919—20), open to all India, and runners-up for the Durand All-India Association Football Cup (1921), and they then went on active service to Waziristan.

Marching up to Ladha, the farthest post on the Takki Zam line, in December, 1921, they remained in camp there for over a year, garrisoning permanent picquets and carrying out road protection duties.

During this period casualties were experienced from enemy sniping, and on one occasion from a Mahsud attack on a platoon covering the rationing of Prospect Picquet. The chief features of life at Ladha, however, were the necessity for perpetual vigilance against a foe constantly on the lookout for slackness, the strain imposed by all too frequent night duty on the perimeter wall and by constant working parties, the monotony of being shut off from civilization in a ring of

barbed wire, and the vagaries of a climate, which produces with equal ease gales of wind, snow, sleet, hailstones as big as walnuts, great heat, deluges of rain and seas of mud.

Neither weather, however, nor other drawbacks, damped the spirits of the Royal Welch and, besides frequent concerts, boxing tournaments, and other sports competitions in the Regiment itself, their teams captured the Climo Association Football Cup open to the Waziristan Field Force in both 1922 and 1923.

The Battalion was to have returned to India in the autumn of 1922, but plans were changed, and on February 1st, 1923, active operations began. Ladha was first of all evacuated (in a snowstorm), and on February 3rd a converging advance on Makin, the heart of the Mahsud country, was begun by the 7th Brigade from Razmak and by the 9th Brigade, to which the 1st Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers belonged, from Piazhia Ragzha. A fair amount of fighting took place during the two days' advance to the meeting place of the two brigades at Tauda China, and also for a few days after, in connection with the establishment of permanent picquets and the destruction of villages, carried out in punishment for previous murders and outrages. On February 5th, in the course of establishing Split Hill Picquet, the Royal Welch lost 6 killed and 8 wounded, and the Military Medal was won by four Fusiliers—Fusiliers Williams, Owen, Jackson, and Jones—for gallantry in going out under an intense fire to rescue wounded men.

Nearly two months, marked by some heavy storms of snow and rain, were spent at Tauda China, and there was little comfort, except the free rum issue, for men living 20 in each 160 lb. tent. The Regiment succeeded, however, in getting leeks up from India to wear on St. David's Day, besides beer and other extras. The officers had a crowded dinner party that night and used a mess tin as a loving cup for the ceremony of eating the leek. Having been selected to form part of a column organized to extricate the South Waziristan Scouts from Wana Fort, the Regiment first took part in the evacuation of Tauda China, marched with the column to Jandola, and thence moved up through the famous Shahur Tangi (defile in the river bed) to Dargai Oba and back. Happily but few shots were fired, and the Battalion lost no casualties during these latter operations. On the return of the column to Jandola, Major-General Sir T. G. Matheson, commanding Waziristan Field Force, visited all the units, and handed to the Officer Commanding the Royal Welch a letter to be conveyed to all ranks, in which he thanked all ranks for "their good work while in Waziristan." The letter went on to say: "In the Makin operations you showed the fine spirit which animates your Battalion and carried out every task set you with dash and courage regardless of losses, thereby winning the admiration of your comrades

and the wholesome respect of the enemy. . . . I congratulate you particularly because a year ago your Regiment consisted mostly of very young soldiers who have now developed into a fine and well disciplined body of men. . . . I wish also to congratulate you on your smartness and discipline in camp. . . ."

From Waziristan the 1st Battalion was sent to Multan, the hottest British station in India, and soon signalized its return from the Frontier by becoming runners-up for the Mussoorie All India Boxing Championship, narrowly missing first place. The team brought away the Challenge Cup for second place, the Fly-weight Cup (Fusilier 53 F. W. Evans), the Medal for runner-up in the Fly-weights (Fusilier 535 Thomas), and the Best Loser's Cup (Fusilier Shepherd). It is noteworthy that the last-named cup was given for a fight between two of the Royal Welch.

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Here at the close of 1923 we will leave the doings of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and surely no one can read their story, even when told as baldly as in this present book, without a thrill of pride at the wonderful standard of devotion and gallantry, which has been maintained for over 234 years.

Hardly an important campaign has been fought by British soldiers, in which the Royal Welch have not had a glorious share.

Hardly a city stands in Flanders and the Netherlands, the cockpit of Europe, that has not welcomed them as friends or yielded to them as foes. Hardly an operation of war can be cited, that they have not performed—attacks on and defence of positions—assaults on fortresses—stern resistance to long sieges—landings in open boats in the teeth of the enemy—naval actions in His Majesty's ships—arduous marches to the relief of comrades hard pressed—long retreats ending in victory—fighting in jungles—fighting in the snow—fighting in the burning sun—and mountain warfare—all can be found in the pages of this book.

The past record of the Royal Welch is, indeed, difficult to match. As to the future—

*Young Soldiers, it is in your hands !*

## **THE COLOURS OF THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS AND THE BADGES UPON THEM.**

The Colours of the Royal Welch are not mere pieces of silk—mere flags,

### **THEY ARE THE REGIMENT.**

They represent the King, and the Empire, of which he is the head, and of which we are citizens. The Regimental Colour represents the countless Royal Welchmen who have lived, and worked, and fought, and died in their country's service. That is why soldiers and civilians alike, when they see borne past them the glorious Union Jack or the blue silk banner, ablaze with badges and honours, are proud to salute or raise their hats. To us, Royal Welchmen, let the King's Colour be a pledge of our loyalty to our King and Country, and let the Regimental Colour be a pledge of our determination to uphold the honour and add to the glory of the Royal Welch.

### **THE KING'S COLOUR.**

The King's Colour is a Union Jack, with "XXIII" in Roman numerals, and a Crown in the centre. On it are emblazoned the ten Battle Honours selected from the 81 won by the Royal Welch in the Great War.

### **THE REGIMENTAL COLOUR.**

The Regimental Colour is a blue flag, with the following devices on it :—

In the top corner, nearest the pole, the Union Jack.

In the bottom corner, nearest the pole, the Red Dragon.

In the top corner, farthest from the pole, the Rising Sun.

In the bottom corner, farthest from the pole, the White Horse.

In the centre, the Prince of Wales's Feathers, and below them the Sphinx.

Round the Prince of Wales's Feathers are yellow scrolls, with the Battle Honours won prior to 1914 embroidered upon them.

### **THE MEANING OF THE BADGES.**

The Red Dragon, The Rising Sun, and the Prince of Wales's Feathers are the badges of the Princes of Wales. These badges were granted to the Regiment in recognition of their great services in Marlborough's campaigns against the French (Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet), when King George I conferred also the title of "The Prince of Wales's Own Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusiliers" upon the 23rd.

The White Horse of Hanover, with the motto *Nec aspera terrent* (which means "Nor do hardships dismay") was a reward for the Battle of Dettingen, in which King George II, whose badge it was, fought so bravely.

The Sphinx, with the word "Egypt," was granted as a memorial of the services of the 23rd in helping to drive the French Army from that country in 1801.

### THE FLASH.

When you see a soldier in the street or anywhere else with five black ribbons fluttering from the back of his collar, you will know that there is only one regiment to which he can possibly belong, and that regiment is the Royal Welch Fusiliers. No one, whether soldier or civilian, can fail to notice it, and the first time he sees it, is almost sure to ask what it is, and to expect the wearer to be able to tell him all about it.

"Relic of many a fight and siege and sack. It points a moral and adorns the back." The Royal Welch Fusiliers was the last regiment which wore the pigtail. These pigtails used to be powdered and greased, and in order to protect the red tunics or rather coatees from the grease, the tail of the wig was enclosed in a bag called the queue-bag. The wearing of the pigtail was discontinued in 1808, but the Regiment, being in Nova Scotia at the time and the last to wear it, retained the ribbons in imitation of the queue-bag. On arrival at Gosport from Gibraltar in 1834, at the marching-in inspection, the peculiarity of dress was noticed by the General, and an order was issued that the flash was to be taken off. Colonel Harrison, who was commanding the Battalion at the time, at once drove to London, and returned in one day with letters which announced that His Majesty King William IV had been pleased to grant the Flash as a "peculiarity whereby to mark the dress of that distinguished Regiment."

Until 1900 it was worn only by officers, warrant officers, and staff-sergeants, but in that year orders were received that it was to be worn on the tunic by all ranks of the Regiment. When the 1st Battalion was at Aldershot (1904-07) vigorous, and, for the time, successful efforts were made to prevent the Flash being worn in Service Dress by the officers, warrant officers, and staff-sergeants. Yet another attack was made on the privilege in 1915, but met with complete defeat, and sanction has now been given for other ranks also to wear the Flash in Service Dress, when used as review order or for walking out.

### "BILLY."

So old is the custom of the Royal Welch possessing a Goat, which marches at their head, that no record exists of the first "Billy."

It is, however, known that the Regimental Goat of the time went into action at the Battle of Bunker's Hill in 1775, and the following tale is told of the capers he cut on March 1st of that year :—

“ It happened in 1775, in Boston, when the goat was being ridden by a drummer boy round the officers' dinner table that the animal gave such a spring from the floor that he dropped his rider upon the table, and then, bounding over the heads of some officers, he ran away to the barracks with all his trappings, to the no small joy of the garrison.”

To this day the Goat is brought into the officers' dining-room on each St. David's night, but, to avoid injury to the boys of the Regiment, he is no longer ridden round, but led by the Goat-Major round the table.

In addition to the above, the Royal Welch Fusiliers jealously keep up the privilege of passing in review, preceded by the Goat with its horns gilded.

It was in 1844 that the late Queen Victoria gave the first “ Royal ” Goats, one to each Regular Battalion ; and since that date they have always been presented by the Sovereign. The Goats, from which these are selected, are kept in Windsor Park ; and the original pair, with which the herd started, were the gift of the Shah of Persia to Queen Victoria. One of the goats presented by Queen Victoria died in the Crimea during the war there in 1854, and was not replaced until the return of the Regiment to England ; but when March 1st, 1855, came round, there was the usual St. David's Night Dinner in the officers' mess before Sevastopol, and, as usual, a goat with gilded horns appeared and was led round the table. When it arrived at Lieutenant-Colonel Lysons' side, it stood up on its hind legs and drank a glass of sherry to St. David. It was then found that this loyal goat was no other than the Colonel's groom. Another goat accompanied the 1st Battalion through the Indian Mutiny, and its head is still preserved in the officers' mess. Yet another died with the 2nd Battalion during the Ashantee Campaign and “ Billy ” accompanied the 1st Battalion to South Africa in 1899 and to Flanders in 1914. In fact, the Goat goes wherever the Regiment goes, and is a very important part of it.

On March 1st, 1904, the Goat of the 1st Battalion was presented by the citizens of Lichfield with a chain and shield, which he wears on all review order parades. This was given as a token of their esteem, and as a recognition of the services of the 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers in the South African War.

The particular “ Billy,” however, round whose neck the chain was first placed, had no war service. The Goat, which went to South Africa

with the Battalion, died there, and was temporarily replaced by one bought from a Boer farm until the return of the Royal Welch to England.

### **THE WHITE APRONS AND GAUNTLETS OF THE PIONEERS.**

It has always been a distinction of the Royal Welch Fusiliers that their Pioneers wear white buckskin aprons and gauntlets on parade ; and though, in the year 1886, an inspecting General questioned their right to them, the result of an appeal to the War Office was a letter in which the then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, was pleased to approve of their being continued to be worn. This is a right which no other regiment shares.

# THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS

The Plume of the Prince of Wales. In the first and fourth corners the Rising Sun ; in the second corner the Red Dragon ; in the third corner the White Horse with motto, "*Nec aspera terrent.*"  
The Sphinx. superscribed "Egypt."

## BATTLE HONOURS

|                     |              |                            |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| "Namur, 1695."      | "Badajoz."   | "Inkerman."                |
| "Blenheim."         | "Salamanca." | "Sevastopol."              |
| "Ramillies."        | "Vittoria."  | "Lucknow."                 |
| "Oudenarde."        | "Pyrenees."  | "Ashantee, 1873-4."        |
| "Malplaquet."       | "Nivelle."   | "Burma, 1885-87."          |
| "Dettingen."        | "Orthes."    | "Relief of Ladysmith."     |
| "Minden."           | "Toulouse."  | "South Africa, 1899-1902." |
| "Corunna."          | "Peninsula." | "Pekin, 1900."             |
| "Martinique, 1809." | "Waterloo."  |                            |
| "Albuhera."         | "Alma."      |                            |

## THE GREAT WAR—42 BATTALIONS

|                          |                                 |                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| "Mons."                  | "Scarpe, 1917."                 | "Vittorio Veneto."      |
| "Le Cateau."             | "Arleux."                       | "Italy, 1917-18."       |
| "Retreat from Mons."     | "Bullecourt."                   | "Dolran, 1917, '18."    |
| "Marne, 1914."           | "Messines, 1917, '18."          | "Macedonia, 1915-18"    |
| "Aisne, 1914, '18."      | "Pilckem."                      | "Suvla."                |
| "La Bassée, 1914."       | "Menin Road."                   | "Sari Bair."            |
| "Ypres, 1914, '17, '18." | "Polygon Wood."                 | "Landing at Suvla."     |
| "Langemarck, 1914."      | "Broodseinde."                  | "Gallipoli, 1915-16."   |
| "Gheluvelt."             | "Poelcappelle."                 | "Rumani."               |
| "Neuve Chapelle."        | "Passchendaele."                | "Egypt, 1915-17."       |
| "Aubers."                | "Cambrai, 1917, '18."           | "Gaza."                 |
| "Festubert, 1915."       | "St. Quentin."                  | "El Mughar."            |
| "Loos."                  | "Bapaume, 1918."                | "Jerusalem."            |
| "Somme, 1916, '18."      | "Lys."                          | "Jericho."              |
| "Albert, 1916, '18."     | "Bailleul."                     | "Tell 'Asur."           |
| "Bazentin."              | "Kemmel."                       | "Megiddo."              |
| "Delville Wood."         | "Scherpenberg."                 | "Nablus."               |
| "Pozières."              | "Hindenburg Line."              | "Palestine, 1917-18."   |
| "Guillemont."            | "Havrincourt."                  | "Tigris, 1916."         |
| "Flers-Courclette."      | "Épéhy."                        | "Kut al Amara, 1917."   |
| "Morval."                | "St. Quentin Canal."            | "Baghdad."              |
| "Le Transloy."           | "Beaurevoir."                   | "Mesopotamia, 1916-18." |
| "Ancre Heights."         | "Selle."                        |                         |
| "Ancre, 1916, '18."      | "Sambre."                       |                         |
| "Arras, 1917."           | "France and Flanders, 1914-18." |                         |



The following additional Battle Honours for the Great War have been awarded to the Royal Welch Fusiliers since this book went to press:—

|                       |        |                           |
|-----------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| " Messines, 1914 "    | ...    | Won by the 2nd Battalion. |
| " Armentières, 1914 " | ... .. | 2nd ..                    |
| " Givenchy, 1914 "    | ... .. | 4th ..                    |
| " Langemarck, 1917 "  | ... .. | 17th ..                   |
| " Valenciennes "      | ... .. | 9th ..                    |

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